

General Topics :: The single mother dilemma

The single mother dilemma, on: 2012/2/11 21:03

What about single Mothers? Can they submit, and find Godly shelter?

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

roadsign writes:, on another thread;

"Just curious, BrotherTom,"

"How would you guide and encourage single mothers? There are many around, even in the church. They are trying to care for children, discipline, hold down a job, manage a home, and deal with loneliness and emotional fatigue."

"They don't have an opportunity to obey God regarding authority. They must be the authorities in their homes, or their homes will unravel. In fact, to fail to do so would be negligence."

What scriptures would guide them in the role in which they find themselves?

Diane

This is a very serious problem, and an issue that the Church must find a solution for; NOT to be ignored. I think God is watching...and I would like your serious input and ideas....Tom

Re: The single mother dilemma - posted by CJeanne, on: 2012/2/11 22:11

I just want to say that I hope others will contribute to this thread who have experience of this situation and wisdom to share about it. My daughter is in this situation and to my mind managing a herculean feat without complaining, as if it were the most natural thing in the world -- because that's what the modern world seems to expect of women these days, single parenting being so politically correct and marriage being so trivialized. But there just has to be a heavy toll, both for her and the children. I don't live close enough to be a help and since she's not a Christian (yet?) she doesn't have a Christian perspective on parenting or whatever help a church might have to offer -- and I have the impression it may not offer much anyway. I've often thought that the church should give more attention to such situations but that's as far as I've gone on the subject. The world today destroys marriage and natural relationships and new believers come into the church in many states of crippled lives.

I was one of them myself some twenty years ago, not with the responsibility of children at that point but a single person who would have been lost in church without others taking the time to be encouraging. I was blessed to be taken under the wing of an older lady whose spiritual gift was obviously shepherding. She collected many of us and shepherded us through Bible studies and personal friendship and meals at her home and practical help with finances and whatever else she was able to provide as need arose. Among other things, she provided a refuge in her home for another friend who was having a nervous breakdown after her husband left her. I didn't realize how special and unusual she was until she moved away and I was truly on my own. Fortunately by then I had made other friendships.

Sorry to dwell so much on this since it's not the topic of the thread and single people may have problems but single women with children have even more. I guess my point is that one dedicated Christian woman can make a ministry of help that accomplishes a lot for others and perhaps this is a ministry that could be encouraged more. Young women with children need others to lift some of the responsibility for the children, caring for them as needed, perhaps also helping with housework, and just being a friend.

It's tricky to involve Christian men in a situation with a single mother but truly male influence is needed in those situation

s and I don't know how that might best be worked out. A couple making the effort to include them in their lives? Especially an older couple?

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/2/11 22:30

BrotherTom, I appreciate you drawing emphasis to this issue. It is a pressing social concern. The children of these mothers are bound to suffer in these situations - and that will have a significant impact in the future.

What makes this more complicated is our social assistance programs - and the whole mentality of reliance on the state. Also, getting a cheque each month cannot compensate for the lack of a fatherly presence and protection in the home.

The church could really shine here - by being an authoritative community in which single parent families can thrive and bloom. Imagine if at least one church in each town felt specifically called into a ministry to these people.

Diane

Re: - posted by CJeanne, on: 2012/2/11 22:53

Hi Diane,

I love the idea of a church adopting this as a ministry. Can you spell out some of how you imagine this working in practical terms?

And really good point about the social assistance programs. I've often thought the church really MUST take over here whatever that would involve.

Re: The single mother dilemma - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2012/2/12 18:28

Single Motherhood is a dilemma, for sure. Having worked at a CPC for 15 years one gets a perspective not seen by many. Perhaps the most devastating one is that there are those who plan to be a single mother. Really! Oh, yes, they may claim to be Christians...! SIGH. They do NOT want to get married because they do not trust males to be there in the long haul, but they want children so they get them and get on welfare - supported by the taxpayer.

Upon reading this it becomes obvious that for some it is a sin issue, pure and simple.

Then you have those who are left alone because of divorce - another issue. Some of these are victims not of their own choosing, but this is not always the case, either. I am hearing there is just as many married females involved in extra-marital affairs as married men. Again, it is a sin issue. What do you do about it?

What do preachers do to protect their flock from indulging in sinful behaviors? Personally, I place a lot of blame for this on the leadership of the group. They have caved into pressure to conform to a Hollywood lifestyle amongst their people because you do not want to be judgmental. People want to play with sin and then do not want to reap the harvest. Won't work.

Knowing all this won't fix an existing problem, or will it? It has been my stance on this issue that the leadership MUST work to teach the young the dangerous consequences of immorality and how it will undermine marriage stability. A high percentage of marriage failures can be attributed to the couple having been involved in fornication rendering bonding next to impossible once they get married. They have tasted the fruits of sin and the devil has convinced them it is sweet, so there is little motivation to pursue infidelity once the vows are said. For too many all these vows mean is that they will stick to this person until they find one they like better.

But, what do you do with an existing problem? The problem of mothers being victimized by a philandering husband?

We had in our church a single mother with three children. Our deacon took it upon himself to be there for the son. He took him hunting and did male things like this with him. He grew up to be a fine young man who is now married with several children. The girls married well and all have children. In the meantime, the mother stayed close to the LORD, was faithful to her marriage vows. She drew near to the LORD and He was a husband to her. Eventually, her husband died leaving her a widow. A few years later she married a widower who cares for her.

Another lady was left by her husband and she has remained single, true to her marriage vows. Her children grew up, married honorably. She enjoys the affection of her children. Since she was a part owner of a business, its assets were divided and she reinvested her money which still is earning her a livelihood. Today she is involved in a crises ministry.

This is how it was handled in our church.

Blessings,
ginnyrose

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/2/13 7:20

Quote:
----- I love the idea of a church adopting this as a ministry. Can you spell out some of how you imagine this working in practical terms?

Here's how I imagine steps which equip a church to minister effectively to single mother families:

1. The church experiences revival and reformation – and becomes re-ordered in its purpose for existing - under the authority of God.
2. Through effective leadership it comes to see marriage and family relationships as foundational.
3. The church begins to recognize the huge gaps present among its members – especially the absence of a father's influence.
4. The members re-orientate their priorities – so that the more vulnerable members receive appropriate care. They seek to strengthen these mothers – so that they have more emotional energy for their own children. That includes spiritual priorities, knowledge for financial management, child care, discipline, etc.
5. The older women minister to the younger women, etc.
6. Child care.

I could go on and on.... What we don't want to perpetuate is simply a welfare/victim mentality, which keeps these families in a state of dependency. And we somehow want to help mothers move into more mature habits of relationship and responsibility. Otherwise their children will merely repeat the pattern.

It takes a whole church to raise a child!

Quote:
-----Our deacon took it upon himself to be there for the son. He took him hunting and did male things like this with him.

Now, this is deaconing! This shows that even if a church is not fully "revived", there are always individuals who, through God's working in their own lives, come to take on such roles. What a blessing in any church!

Diane

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2012/2/13 9:43

Recently a friend of ours shared a conversation he had with a black preacher. They were discussing the breakdown of the black family.

The friend told the preacher the father needs to take the role of the headship in the home in order to build strong families. This was a sore issue with this preacher! He told our friend, "Look! it is not the men, it is the women! They refuse to submit to their husbands. If he says anything contrary to what the wife thinks in regards to the children, she will take them and leave! These women are raising nothing but a bunch of hoodlums!" And this is the evaluation of a black pastor.

Years ago stats told us that 25% of all black males have been in prison, or are in prison or are out on parole. Today this figure is higher. I used to share this statistic with my black clients and they agreed it is right except that it seems to be a bit low.

This is the observation of concerned blacks in my area - do not know what it is like where you are. However, having said this, let me hasten to say the whites are coming right along - they are just a little bit behind. But the reality is that broken homes, single motherhood will push up these stats, no matter what the skin color or culture you are in.

It is a mess out there. It gets really sad when it has invaded the church and I think this is the concern expressed by the lead post.

Re: The single mother dilemma - posted by Sree (), on: 2012/2/13 10:17

In 1 Timothy 5 Paul considers only widows over 60 to be listed as Widows. There should be a reason for this. Single Mom is not same as Widows (lower standard) so definitely they cannot be listed if they are not over 60.

The idea of supporting Single Moms should not result in Churches encouraging this social status of being Single Mom. This is dangerous than not caring for Single Moms.

Single Mom status is a dangerous because it will most likely lead the women into adultery to satisfy her needs and also result in poor parenting. This is also seen as main reason for increase in homosexuality because if it is Boy Child then he will lack Dad's love resulting in Choosing a male partner.

Instead seeing what can be done for Single Mom, Churches should focus on preventive measures. At least for the marriages that they conduct among their members, they need to make sure these couples understand the responsibilities of marriage and should not enter into a married relationship with divorce or parting as an option.

Best thing that a Church can do to a single Mom (not widows) is to unite her with her husband. Divorce for any reason is not a part of new Covenant life.

Re: - posted by Solomon101, on: 2012/2/13 11:54

Sree states: Best thing that a Church can do to a single Mom (not widows) is to unite her with her husband. (You qualified that as saying that they must be under 60 years of age per 1 Tim 5) Divorce for any reason is not a part of new Covenant life.

I Respond: I do have a couple of questions then,

1. You suggest the church should reunite her with her husband. Well, what if she is a 22 year old with 2 children, ages 1 and 2, who's husband was tragically killed in a car wreck four months ago. In addition he was the sole income provider for the home. What do you do now? She can't afford child care with the salary she will make IF she can find employment. Her bank account is now empty and they will be shutting her electricity and heat off in 7 days leaving her and her children in the cold to freeze. This all by no choice or fault of her own. She is obviously well below the 60 year old requirement to be receiving help from the Church that you quoted.

Do you still say the church has no responsibility to help this sister?

2 You stated, "Divorce FOR ANY REASON is not a part of new Covenant life". What if it was your daughter. In fact, what if it was your daughter who had been severely beaten up by her husband. She has had 5 broken bones from the beating

s her husband has given her when he comes home drunk. She also has had many trips to the hospital to have other injuries treated that he inflicted upon her. He often goes out and hires prostitutes to satisfy his sexual perversion and then tries to demand his wife perform the same perverted acts... if she won't then it's another severe beating. He has said he will kill her if she makes him upset again. They have 1 child and she fears for the child's life when he is around. She fears he may kill their child as well as her in his next fit of rage.

If this is your daughter are you saying you would tell her to stay in this marriage?

Again, you stated, ""Divorce FOR ANY REASON is not a part of new Covenant life". There are clear scriptures, one from The Gospels and one from Paul's writing, that specifically detail 2 instances in which divorce is certainly allowed. I agree that it is a narrow set of circumstances. However, the scripture clearly gives those circumstances and if those conditions are there then it is in no way wrong to divorce.. again, if those conditions are there.

Re: Is she my sister in Christ?..or just another out of order burden?, on: 2012/2/13 12:10

"The idea of supporting Single Moms should not result in Churches encouraging this social status of being Single Mom. This is dangerous than not caring for Single Moms."...Sree

"Instead seeing what can be done for Single Mom, Churches should focus on preventive measures."...Sree

So, in your mind, ministering to single moms is encouraging her "social status"? as a single mom?..To me, this is like the ostrich burying her head in the sand when conflict comes.

So, can single mom's be a part of the church? and if they suffer want, or need for their children, spiritually or materially, are they to be ignored because their lives are out of order? In your mind this is dangerous?

Yes, there was a widows list, and Paul did encourage the younger widows to marry...but that does not mean they were abandoned until they were. If they were saved, and born again, their status would be as an equal member of the body, just as me and you, and the same would be so if they were abandoned by their husbands.

This is the spirit of equality within the early church, and every church ever that has walked together in severe persecution. It is the Spirit of Christ among them.

" And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need."

I'm sure there were young widows there, and abandoned women too. I think they qualified before Jesus, just as their children did. Also, you left out an important part of the equation; The Fatherless. The Fatherless does not mean just the orphaned. In 3rd world ghettos today, and in American "Hoods" it has become a plague...for fatherless children receive their approbation from the gangs.

Father-less means without a father; No Dad. Today it has become harder and harder for a family to make ends meet, with two incomes...and many single moms have no job skills, and just focused on being a homemaker. I cannot imagine how my single sisters do it, and raise a family. They are tougher than me, and braver.

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

This is PURE religion, meaning the main thrust of our Christian walk, in the Apostle's exhortation, and if a sister has become a single mom, and is struggling or her children have need, how can I say I have the Love of God in me, and ignore her. I cannot.

Or, as you say, I could just have a series of seminars on the "Preventive Measures of ending the Status of the Single Mom"...and leave it at that.

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2012/2/13 14:33

Quote:

Well, what if she is a 22 year old with 2 children, ages 1 and 2, who's husband was tragically killed in a car wreck four months ago.

My entire post was regarding non Widow single Mom, either Divorced or separated. Also I just mentioned 1 Timothy 5 on widows over 60 just to say that Paul considered even Widows only over 60 to be included in the list of Widows (I believe it is to give them a chance to marry again), definitely a young single Mom who is not a widow cannot be included either. May be I did not make it clear.

Quote:

Again, you stated, "'Divorce FOR ANY REASON is not a part of new Covenant life". There are clear scriptures, one from The Gospels and one from Paul's writing, that specifically detail 2 instances in which divorce is certainly allowed.

Jesus says in Matthew 19:8:-

Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.

So first of all Divorce was permitted only because hardness of heart of men. In new Covenant life there is no place for hard heart. So now with hard heart if you want to divorce then you can only divorce in case of immorality. I also agree there are conditions to divorce but above everything the hard heart comes first.

The instances in which a woman is abused by her husband is because this marriage is either not done under Christian values or because the Church is not talking on maintaining married relationship. If the Church does its Job then there will be a reduced cases of Divorce.

Again I am not saying that divorced or left alone single Mom should not be ministered. I never mentioned that, this is another kind of extreme.

But the Church helping them or supporting them by material things should be done carefully so that it may not result in encouraging people to live as single after marriage.

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2012/2/13 14:41

Also I have to accept I do not have enough light on this subject. So I do not have the answer to all the questions and scenarios. I think it is better for me to keep quit. Neither am I leading a Church to make any important decision on this. I believe every man and woman can be ministered by Church irrespective of their past life, because Bible says God desires everyone to be Saved. I am definitely not against any ministry.

Re: - posted by gators52 (), on: 2012/2/13 14:48

Sree, Unless one man has walked in the shoes of another it's probably best to not give him advice as to what "your take" is on certain scriptures. I'm not trying to be rude. Love covers a multitude of sins. Christ's love. A man's words can confound that same man's spiritual growth. Silence is golden.

Re: - posted by Solomon101, on: 2012/2/13 14:49

@ Sree

Thank you for clarifying what you meant. I doubted that you actually meant things as I understood them. I am glad to see I was reading more into your post than you meant.

In the case of divorce because of adultery in Matthew 19:9

"I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."Â

It seems clear that the situation is if a marriage partner commits adultery they are at that point dead to the one who remained faithful.

If they had been under the law they would have been stoned and killed. That would have allowed the living spouse to then remarry.

The "certificate of divorce" given by Moses was used under all kinds of frivolous reasons to get divorces. However, in the case of adultery no certificate was needed... they were executed by stoning for the offense. Clearly Jesus leaves this as the caveat for divorce being justified in the case of adultery by one of the persons.

Again, thanks for your clarifications.

Blessings!

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2012/2/13 15:00

Quote:

It seems clear that the situation is if a marriage partner commits adultery they are at that point dead to the one who remained faithful.

I was of your opinion only until someone explained me this scripture. If you read from Matt 19:8, and continue into 19:9, you will understand what I am saying. Also if we take New Covenant definition of Adultery (lusting in eyes Matt 5:28), almost every marriage in this world can be divorced!!

Remember the song; LOVE CONQUERED ME!"....., on: 2012/2/13 15:12

"Also I have to accept I do not have enough light on this subject. So I do not have the answer to all the questions and scenarios. I think it is better for me to keep quit.

Neither am I leading a Church to make any important decision on this. I believe every men and women can be ministered by Church irrespective of their past life, because Bible says God desires everyone to be Saved. I am definitely not against any ministry. ".Sree

Thank-you Sree for your gracious reply, which proves to me that we are of the same spirit. All of us are looking for light, and overall, and I think the Church has failed to deal with this issue in a Godly way. I surely don't have the answers...but by faith, Two things;

1.] "Love covers a multitude of Sins"....

2.] And "Mercy overcomes judgment."....

These things are acts of people, not ideas about solutions. Love and Mercy kiss in Agape Love, and when a person, or a local body of believers, touches this depth of Agape...then the single mom issue will be small potatoes. Solutions and ministry will then just happen.

I think that there are no formulas, because every situation is different, and must be addressed individually by the Holy Spirit, and His ministers, male or female.

Jackie Pullinger founded her mission for prostitutes in the forbidden City, in Hong Kong. Many of them had children..and succeeded in very brutal conditions to prove Jesus' grace for the single sinner, and single sinner mom.

We ought to also, but our success only lies in the arms of the Holy Spirit.

Re: - posted by Solomon101, on: 2012/2/13 15:22

@ Sree,

Last comment from me on this for now. I don't want to totally hijack Brothertom's thread here. The issue we are discussing does have bearing on the topic but he is approaching this for a different reason. He is bringing much needed emphasis to the needs of single mother. I have great empathy for the single mother as I was a single dad. Raising my kids on my own while working full time jobs trying to hold life, hearth, home, and family together is a very difficult task. Anyone who has not had the burden of it will scarcely be able to understand the difficulty it entails in our culture. Because of that our church is moving toward offering many helps to the single parent wanting to have Godly influences in their children's lives. I will post some of those ideas when I return later today.

As far as your last thought,

YOU STATED: , If you read from Matt 19:8, and continue into 19:9, you will understand what I am saying. Also if we take New Covenant definition of Adultery (lusting in eyes Matt 5:28), almost every marriage in this world can be divorced!!

I RESPOND: Well...that WAS Matthew 19:9 I posted. I have studied it intensely for some 25 plus years. Here they both are;

Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery." (If they are sexually immoral and adulterous you are justified in the divorcing of them. They are dead to you)

May I humbly suggest that you research out what Paul said on this topic. Adultery IS DIFFERENT than any other sin. I know that is hard for many to hear... however, consider this and go do some deeper looking.. I share with you these scriptures...think about them-

1 Corinthians 6:15-18

15 Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never!

16 Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh."

17 But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit. 18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body.

@ Brothertom - sorry if we took the thread a bit off track. Great topic that needs much attention in today's world. Future posts by me on your thread will be to that end.

Blessings Sree and Brothertom

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/2/13 19:27

It's interesting how quickly this issue turned towards moral legalities. It's true, we wouldn't want to overlook that. But in our dissecting of scripture on these matters, we would do well to look at the real people involved. That will point us to a higher law – which is OUR responsibility.

1) Chances are many single mothers have never known what real marriage is. They never had a two-parent family, let alone one parent who stayed married. She may have no emotional capacity to keep a relationship. A single mother needs to see and experience healthy relationships – not just bible verses of rules which they can't keep. A church can be a tremendous healing environment – through the expression of grace and mercy to one another.

2) She may have become pregnant out of foolishness, and naivety, through a fling with some immature adolescent male who has no capacity to actually be a father – or provide support. She may have three children each with a different father. (I know an example)

3) She may have various psychological issues – which hamper her ability to nurture her children. There may be all kinds of behavioral issues.

4) If she's been through the nightmare of divorce, she may be emotionally drained and broken. The children will be suffering enormously – and carrying scars.

5) She may have become a master at manipulating well-meaning people – like churches – and try to use them for all their worth, with no desire to take personal responsibility. (My former church experienced such a case)

Overall, single mothers and their children are among the most vulnerable members of our society.

We could go on and on, but that is enough to alert us to the tremendously complicated challenges single mothers may be facing IN ADDITION to the other challenges – like managing home and job, and loneliness. It's a huge challenge for the church too.

A thought: Each single mother is both a victim of a fallen world in some way or other, but she is also an agent in her own choices. No one is simply one or the other. Still, the past is the past. And the role of the church is not dependent on whether she did something "sinful" or was merely a victim of circumstance. Remember, the prodigal son deliberately made immoral choices. But that did not deter the Father from expressing sheer mercy and compassion on his return.

A sobering thought: In the OT, Israel came under judgment for neglecting the vulnerable members of their society. Might it be that the way God's people treat single mothers and their children is strongly suggestive of their true state of salvation? That is, the evidence of love?

It really is a sobering thought, isn't it?

May God's people become equipped to minister to single-mothers, desiring to see them grow into maturity.

Diane

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/2/13 20:03

Another sobering thought came to mind:

In view of the prevalence and convenience of abortion, any single mother who has her living children, no matter how she got pregnant, surely deserves to be respected at least on that count. Her children ought to be especially precious to the church.

Diane

Re: - posted by Solomon101, on: 2012/2/13 21:51

@ Roadsign-

DIANE YOU STATED:

In view of the prevalence and convenience of abortion, any single mother who has her living children, no matter how she got pregnant, surely deserves to be respected at least on that count. Her children ought to be especially precious to the church.

I RESPOND:

Thank you. Your post put such a "heart of the matter" and "people come first" reminder into the topic that it choked me up. I suppose it is because I have been in ministry for so many years and in my mind's eye I am seeing the faces of those precious ladies we helped that had decided to keep their children when everyone had advised them to abort those children. Some of those children are grown now and marvelous witnesses for Jesus.

Thanks again Diane. It keeps us in the proper focus and frame of mind.

Blessings!

The olden days...with lots of single mothers..and how us Jesus freaks handled it., on: 2012/2/13 22:11

I was saved out of the hippie movement, and all of the entrapment's of it, into the Jesus People movement. There was a day when Salvation happened all around us, every single day. It was a rare day, when someone was not saved. We baptized once a month in the nearby river....and often had 20-30 confessors of faith.

We carried, and read our bibles everywhere, and wore them out. When people got saved, there was nothing in between them and God. The Holy Spirit entered them visibly, and they became radiant with a holy glow, and they smiled with joy and love toward one another. They had really been born again from above the second time.

The depravity in us before our salvation was no less, for sure, than those today, nor the wounds of sin among us no less severe than today. We were a sick mess, and after being born again, we were healed and delivered of our sicknesses.

Issues like this were trivial, and very common...with most all of us coming out of free love ideas that was founded on immorality as a life-style. There were lots and lots of single mothers in our church.

Almost every one, over the years, got married off, and went on as happy Christian moms. I guess what I'm saying, is that we never worried about figuring it out; We just did it in a very normal and common fashion; loved our brothers and sisters...and in a worshipping church...we all got healed up. God provided, it seemed, for everyone.

Back then, there were "Sisters houses", where perhaps 3 or 4 sisters lived, and some with children. Everybody got a job...and paid rent, and chipped in with the kids. I adapted a family of five boys, and one girl, living with their single mother.

I was single, and had a good job, working with my hands. I cared for those boys, took them fishing at the Ocean, took them out about every weekend, and provided extra's for them, in everyday needs. This went on for several years. I never thought twice about it, or that I was doing some special deed..I wanted to.

Today, these men now, still have respect for me..and made it through into manhood without too much craziness. It was always a joy for me to be there.

This was born out of Community. The Church

Re: The olden days...with lots of single mothers..and how us Jesus freaks handled it. - posted by notlongnow, on: 2012/2/13 22:11

I agree with everything BrotherTom said. It was well said.

Single mothers are one of the most neglected and condemned group of people out there. They do it tough, and they do it tough under the judgemental, ill-informed glare of a lot of on-lookers, who of course never offer any help. Single mothers are also one of society's favourite scapegoats. The large majority of single mothers are victims of unloving, abusive, faithless and selfish men. These are just the facts. However they became single mothers is beside the point anyway. They are women alone trying to raise children alone....the hardest job in the world. MOST are struggling financially and are

worn out emotionally and physically. Their children are often disadvantaged in many ways, through no fault of the mother's. As someone said, most of these children are FATHERLESS, even if there is a 'father' still living somewhere, but otherwise absent. A lot of single mothers also have little, and sometimes NO family support. They desperately need the body of Christ's love and support.

It can be very hard for a single mother to even walk into a smaller church because they are often judged and condemned right off the bat.

Please brothers and sisters, reach out to and love single mothers and their children. They are dying inside sometimes.

As for the no widow over sixty being added to the list. This needs to be taken into context. It was a different culture back then. Highly unlikely any woman unmarried with children was living alone in a house. Families, extended families lived together. Also brothers and brothers in laws would step in and take care of the mother now raising her children alone. It was just commonplace for families to take care of their own women in those situations. It would have been a disgrace not to. I also agree with what another poster said....the church would not of told women who may of needed support to go look after themselves if they were under sixty....they would of helped and supported financially and emotionally, while encouraging remarriage (under the appropriate biblical allowance). They would of helped a brother/sister in need, how much more a single mother?

BrotherTom, I wish with all my heart other christians lived like you described it, in this day and age, as the norm. That is the true christian community and my heart has often ached that it seems rare these days. If only believers still loved and cared like a real FAMILY. It was great reading about how it was back then. It sounded amazing.

One more thing I think it is important that other believers keep in mind. Single mothers are keepers of the home too. God wants them home with their children, available and not run ragged trying to work an outside job and have little to no time left for the children. A lot of christian single mothers want to homeschool as well. We need to support single mothers to be able to stay at home and raise their children and be keepers of their home.

Re: - posted by notlongnow, on: 2012/2/14 2:57

p.s I am very glad someone mentioned abortion. It has long bothered me how the christian community fight so hard against abortion but then seem to do so little for the single mom. I find that incredibly hypocritical and so do I believe, the unbelieving world.

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/2/14 7:03

Quote:

----- The large majority of single mothers are victims of unloving, abusive, faithless and selfish men.

On one side there are the fathers who have no intention of taking responsibility. On the other side are the abortionist vultures (again men) who are eager to make money off of these women in their predicament. The Children's Aid can be hard on them too - confiscating their kids ruthlessly.

Quote:

----- It can be very hard for a single mother to even walk into a smaller church because they are often judged and condemned right off the bat.

Also, because these mothers can do little in the lime light of the church functions, they are easily passed over, if not regarded as a nuisance. They make little contribution to the religious system. The praises and back-strokes tend to go to the successful "performers".

Actually single mothers make a huge contribution to the church - by their very presence. They can serve to sensitive the people to their calling. They serve as a test of the church's corporate priorities. They slow the church down in their obsessive drive toward Babel-tower construction. They are the "neighbor" fallen in the ditch on the roadside.

Quote:
----- One day God will pour Himself upon us again, those who really want Him, and we will become a body again, of equal brothers and sisters, unto the very least of the brethren, and again issues like the single mom ministry will just fall in place, naturally, because they are loved, and worth it.....and no man or woman will ever be judged after their old nature or sins...but as New Creatures! Hallelujah!

Hallelujah indeed! Brothertom, your post sounds like a page right out of Keith Green's story. I'm keeping it in my files. It reminds me of the power of God's healing love when operational among his called ones. The institutional church may continue to resist, but God is quite capable of finding new outlets for his grace.

Diane

Re: - posted by pilgrim777, on: 2012/2/14 9:28

Many of us who have been adopted and cherished by a loving God have forgotten what it was like to be an lonely, forgotten orphan.

Pilgrim

Re: The Servant Song - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/2/14 18:44

Sister, let me be your servant.
Let me be as Christ to you.
Pray that I might have the grace to let you
Be my servant, too.

I will weep when you are weeping,
When you laugh I'll laugh with you.
I will share your joy and sorrow,
'til we see this journey through.

I will hold the Christ light for you
In the night of your fears.
I will hold my hand out for you,
Speak the peace you long to hear.

Re: Restoring the Fatherhood of God - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/2/15 8:01

"In that day seven women will take hold of one man
And say, "We will eat our food and provide our own clothes;
Only let us be called by your name.
TAKE AWAY OUR DISGRACE." Isaiah 4:1

When ministering to single mothers, I believe we would do well to understand some of the driving forces which may have put them in their predicament. Today's rise in promiscuity among young females is, at least in part, driven by the girl's need for fatherly love, which she may have missed in her own formative years. The girl enters adolescence with a huge unmet need. With the influence of media, peers, and other cultural forces, she comes to believe her sense of value a

nd identity is found in a man to whom she can surrender her body sexually. But the male is not fit to fill her true needs, and so they can't form a stable relationship. She just keeps seeking more "love". If she can have a man, she thinks, maybe he can take away her disgrace – her sense of shame and emptiness.

This social predicament is not that different from what Isaiah 4 describes - where men were lost through war. We see that loss through other means, certainly the sexual/industrial revolution and rise in feminism. We have a shortage of men who are men. This is a serious cultural crisis: fathers who are absent, emotionally disengaged, and weak in authority.

When single mothers enter our churches, it's possible that they have huge needs for healthy stable male relationship. Here's where a church can minister, in the context of careful, clear emotional boundaries.

I believe good preaching on the Fatherhood of God can help a congregation, as well as single mothers see how God himself can meet the real God-given need for fatherly intimacy. We see plenty Christological focus, and even a focus on the Spirit, but the Father gets noticeably marginalized. Yet God discloses himself to his people as their Father.

A living, dynamic encounter with God the FATHER (as RELATIONAL deity) through Christ, would be far more effective in changing our young females than superficial behavior modification. It would ultimately help solve the modesty issue – by freeing girls from the need to use their bodies as sexual targets for males. What they really crave - in the depth of their souls is God himself.

God: Our dear loving Father:

"Our Father, who art in heaven..."

"...your Father knows what you need"

"your heavenly Father will also forgive you"

"your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

"in the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish."

Diane

Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2012/2/15 9:25

notlongnow wrote:How ever they became single mothers is beside the point anyway. They are women alone trying to raise children alone....the hardest job in the world.

I just have to disagree with what you said here. I was a single mom for awhile when i was still in high school, although eventually my boyfriend(baby's dad) and I did get married later on. Having been a single mom I see it from both sides of this issue. Of course some do need help but to play them off as victims as if they just ended up being a single mom by accident is to extreme the other way. Of course their those who end up as single parent because of an unwanted divorce, or the loss of a spouse but there are many many young woman out there who do not see fornication as a sin and pregnancy results. It is good that some do not continue on in their sin by aborting the child I do agree with you there. I think we need to teach and share how important it is to wait for marriage with young people of both sexes. GODS plan is the best way and if more was being taught about waiting and being faithful for what GOD has for you then there would not be so many young woman finding themselves in this situation.(there would still be some but far less then now) I think that is where the church should and needs to begin. Of course there is need for love to be extended to all believers in the body no matter what their situations are. I do think we need to be very careful that we don't lift single mothers up to sainthood though and go to far to the other extreme either. Its a fine line but one that can be walked if those in the body are willing to help in physical ways as well as teach truth about GODS plan for families...

God bless
mary

Edited fro added thought: IT actually really does matter how a single mom got to be where she is, it matters because that will be a real guide in how best to share with and support her future with her children and help her in her walk with CHRIST. Give support and love but don't withhold GODS truth from the many are where they are as a result of willful rebellion.(just my thoughts as someone who was once there and glad for those who spoke HIS truth to me in love)

Holiness and charity , on: 2012/2/15 9:58

" IT actually really does matter how a single mom got to be where she is, it matters because that will be a real guide in how best to share with and support her future with her children and help her in her walk with CHRIST."

"Give support and love but don't withhold GODS truth from the many are where they are as a result of willful rebellion"..
..MaryJane

There are several moral qualifications that all Christians must adhere to, to be in good standing with the Lord, and His body.

"Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.

But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?".....and, the widow's moral list:

1 Timothy 5:9-11
King James Version (KJV)

Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man.

Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry;"

If a single mother does not possess a heart toward holiness, and complete Lordship unto Jesus, she is none of ours....

Re: Restoring the Fatherhood of God - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/2/16 7:01

I am surprised no one has taken up on the Fatherhood of God theme. Certainly in some situations I would have received objections something like this:

1) The Father is the Old Testament idea of God – as a harsh disciplinarian father, and always looking down from above at what you do, and is always ready to punish you. Father God is distanced and unaffectionate. We are now in the age of Grace and Jesus provides a kinder more forgiven image of God in people's minds.

2) The church for centuries, through its own ecclesial rulers, has portrayed the Father image as a distant domineering, controlling presence - lacking mercy and warmth. That image gets transferred to God.

3) Single mothers may have experienced abusive or negligent fathers, and that father image will rise to their minds when we refer to God as Father. Better to call him Mother for their sake, or simply – "Creator".

To be honest, I did not expect to see those objections raised on SI. Still, surely the need to restore the Fatherhood of God – especially in light of a single mother's core spiritual/psychological need – deserves a spot in our agenda. Jesus came to restore us to the Father in RELATIONSHIP – to our Abba-Daddy. Isn't it important to emphasize a child-like dependency on Him – in a parent-child relationship – as foundational to growing up into maturity?

When sinners encounter the REAL Father God, through Christ, and through God's people involved in their lives, then an

y distorted images would flee. Don't you think?

What does the Fatherhood of God mean to you, yourself? That's the image of God you and I would portray to these young mothers.

“But you did not receive a spirit of fear, but the Spirit of SONSHIP, and by him we cry, “Abba, Father”. Rom. 8:15

Diane

Re: - posted by notlongnow, on: 2012/2/17 19:20

Hi MaryJane,

I think what I was trying to say is, that it is beside the point how they became single mothers in terms of ministering to a single parent family who is poor and needy. I don't see any qualifiers in God's word when it comes to taking care of the poor, needy and fatherless, of which the single parent family often falls into.

Of course if you are talking in terms of the gospel, and the christian life....if someone is continuing in sin and claims to be a christian there are scriptures that speak of what to do in that case....that applies to all believers single mother or not.

There are distinctions in how you deal with a believer and a non believer, that goes without saying. I didn't believe this thread was about that but rather about how to help and love a single mother family. It comes back to real relationship, not just applying a set of rules to someone. One you know where someone is at you can minister to them appropriately in terms of the gospel, and in terms of emotional and practical support.

The children are completely innocent in all this, and need the extra help believers should be offering to support these families. The women too often come from disadvantaged or dysfunctional backgrounds and so have made bad decisions out of desperation or simply have been taken advantage of by wolves. Who here hasn't made wrong choices in their life, including fornication before they were saved. Did a pregnancy result from it? No? Then lucky for you, you can hide your past forgiven sin and go on. No one should judge single parents. MaryJane you are very blessed the father of your child married you. Most single parents have to struggle on in single parenthood and would of loved to be a married woman.

With all due respect I am yet to see the state of single motherhood be raised to the status of sainthood. Rather I believe a lot of believers will be held accountable for their failure to love and provide for single mothers and their children, and the way they are treated like they have committed the unforgivable sin. It has been more my experience that single mothers are one of the favoured scapegoats of society and of Pharisees. (Not directing this comment at you MaryJane.)

God bless.

Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2012/2/17 21:12

by notlongnow on 2012/2/17 13:20:55

It has been more my experience that single mothers are one of the favoured scapegoats of society and of Pharisees.

Greetings

We should help but that help must be in all areas...both with physical needs and lovingly speaking truth with them. I do think there are different situations as I said and the LORD does lead us in how is best in sharing, expressing, and loving those who find themselves in the situation of raising a child on their own.

I just know for myself I was and still am so thankful to the sister who spoke truth to me, she did not ignore the sin I was openly in or contemplating. She loved me enough to help in all the areas that matter...

God bless
mary

Re: - posted by Jer2, on: 2012/2/19 2:00

Hello! I have read here some, and now want to join this discussion just a bit.

As a Christian single mother, I observed that my family were a problem to most "committed Christians." As my children developed some friends in Christian families, and the parents learned that I was a divorced parent, these parents pulled their kids back from mine. I saw the same responses to another Christian single mother I knew. We were untouchables in Christian society, and our children were second-class to theirs.

Unfortunately, as my children went through nine years of Christian school, and we attended churches through that time, they rarely experienced whole-hearted Christian hospitality and kindness from the parents who considered themselves to be devout. They always kept a distance between my children and theirs.

On the other hand, the Lord tenderly led my little flock. As I learned better to trust Him and look to Him for our needs, He answered in such sweet ways! My children experienced God's Fatherly provision and care in ways that their friends didn't because they had need of nothing.

It would have been better if Christians had been involved with us, but God had compassion on us, and showed Himself to be a good Father, nevertheless.

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/2/19 7:31

Quote:
----- On the other hand, the Lord tenderly led my little flock. As I learned better to trust Him and look to Him for our needs, He answered in such sweet ways! My children experienced God's Fatherly provision and care in ways that their friends didn't because they had need of nothing.

It would have been better if Christians had been involved with us, but God had compassion on us, and showed Himself to be a good Father, nevertheless.

Welcome aboard, Jer2! Your testimony is a blessing and a wonderful contribution. It reminds us that God's love, like water, flows to the lowest points in human experience. Jesus adamantly insisted that those whom God's people judge as the worst sinners, will be the first to receive his new hope. It seems that through your dire neediness, you have experienced God's merciful kindness towards yourself, and that seems to have enabled you to extend mercy towards those who rejected you so severely.

It is true that the obsessive attentiveness to the Law blinds many from seeing real people as real people, and from extending compassion to the most needy. Spiritual hardness prevents us from fulfilling our calling towards the "undeserving". But in the end of the day we all will stand before God; and it is not perfected doctrines, but our expressions of perfected love (which in reality is perfected doctrine) which will be the defining proof of our salvation.

May God, as your dear Heavenly Father, continue to empower you and your little flock to trust him for all your needs. Through you may he display the power of his merciful and long-suffering love. May he use you to be a witness of God's love to humanity - to both "Jew" and "Gentile" - the in-group and the out-group - that many in both categories may truly come to know him.

QUESTION: How might an online forum like this serve you best?

Diane

Re: - posted by Jer2, on: 2012/2/19 11:34

roadsign, your reply is a complete sermon about true Christianity. It is full of truth and grace!

It is very kind of you to ask how a forum might serve someone like me. Probably nothing that wouldn't be a good way to serve anyone else on here.

But, as everyone here has flesh-and-blood contact with Christians who are divorced or are single mothers, don't assume that they are currently in sin. The divorced may have perfectly Biblical reasons for being divorced. Single mothers may have been married. Both groups may have repented of earlier sin.

Mainly, it would be so helpful to such parents to have their kids feel accepted and included by strong Christian adults and their children. I wanted so badly to have some Christians help reinforce what I was trying to teach my children by displaying fatherly and motherly, Christian love for them. I wanted their best friends to be children being trained in following the Lord. But the parents wouldn't allow my children into the group. It is good for us all to remember that what we do to the least of these, we do to Jesus.