

'... to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord' (1 Corinthians 7:35)

# Undivided



FROM THE  
EDITOR ...

JESUS FELLOWSHIP/  
MODERN JESUS ARMY

**CELIBACY  
INSPIRATIONAL  
NEWSLETTER**

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## **A remedy for the 'poisonous cocktail'**

AS GOD mobilises His people in this day of His power, His gift of celibacy is being re-discovered. The call of Jesus to the single life is being taken more seriously now than for a long time. Unless the Church honours, welcomes and receives from celibates it stands guilty of neglecting those whom Jesus prizes highly.

Other churches and networks are gaining an interest in this lost jewel of the Protestant Church. I quote from a recent book *One of us* by Steve Chilcraft (published by Nelson Word).

"It is the third category (those who choose not to marry for spiritual reasons, as in Matthew 19) that was so revolutionary in Jesus' own day and is so little understood and undervalued in the Protestant tradition today.

"Twentieth century Western culture has dramatically reacted against the earlier 'puritanism' which was so embarrassed by human sexuality. This produced a poisonous cocktail of ideas which has distorted our view of celibacy. It is commonly understood that anyone from adolescence onwards who is not engaging in sexual intercourse is either unfulfilled or repressed or both!

"For much of the Church's history voluntary celibacy was regarded as a superior status: marriage was for the weak who could not control their own desires..."

  
Huw Lewis

# Cutting through the cords

## Extracts from a letter from a celibate sister in the Jesus Fellowship, sharing some wisdom:

SO MANY of us have become entangled in our needs, our disappointments, but God is wanting to dig us out and find the buried treasure. Hurts can bury us.

These things can make us self-centred, self-orientated and self-despairing. The very opposite of the celibate heart that sets God and the Church before our needs, that lives to love and build the church with God's prophetic word burning in our hearts.

**Save me from those things that might distract me... please take them away and purify my heart...**

God spoke to me and said that the way of celibacy is a way of faith, from beginning to end. When He called me I believed He would provide. But now so often the heart of unbelief takes over and what a stranglehold it is on the celibate gifting. We must come against this unbelief with faith. We must believe in its utter God-giveness, its preciousness, its effectiveness in me. His gift is and will be fruitful in my life.

I saw a picture of lots of full sacks. The contents of the sacks moved restlessly, churning and even kicking at the sides. Yet these sacks were tied with strong cord. The cord was unbelief and it needed cutting away. Unbelief grows through disappointments, failures and

hurts that we go through. As we cut through these cords we will see what the Lord will do! I got just a glimpse of the rich treasure that came forth.

With the celibate gifting comes the parcel of suffering. But this suffering must not drive us into ourselves but cause us to find Jesus.

For those of us in our late thirties and forties when our youth is nearly gone – God laughs! He does not think as the world thinks and neither must we! The world expects decline and slowing down but not us! We must not lessen the pace, but tread the road of ever expanding vision. The greatest is still to come!

## 2nd Class Single

- In a recent survey by the Evangelical Alliance it was found that a third of those over eighteen attending church are single (in the Jesus Fellowship it is 60%).
- Of these 63% had never married; 4% were separated; 9% were divorced; 24% were widowed.
- Single women outnumber single men in church by 2 to 1 – although in the under 30 category the difference is less dramatic (56% to 44%).
- Only half the churches surveyed used single people to lead house groups. Of those that did, women were much more likely than men to be asked to do so.
- Only 20% of churches have any regular organised programme for single people.
- Single people make up only 26% of the church leaders, but are 36% of the church membership

## Crashing through the thorny barrier!

### Jesus Fellowship member Kevin has found celibacy to be 'the ultimate challenge'

FOR TWO and a half years after becoming a Christian I longed to love and serve God in a really committed way. But circumstances, bad debts and bills, an unhelpful relationship with a girl and impurity in my life – all put a dark cloud over my walk with God.

Then, when I first came to the Jesus Fellowship and heard about celibacy, everything within me wanted the gift of living single for the Lord. I saw celibacy as the backbone of the church and I cried out to God to receive the gift.

**Screamed with pain**  
I received prayer and was reminded of some previous wisdom that God had given me in a vision. I saw myself running on a race track into the home straight when I noticed ahead of me lots of thorns spread across the rack. Although I wanted to avoid them, a power caused me to run straight into them and I screamed and shouted with pain

as I dragged myself through to the other side. Suddenly I found that I was free and I looked behind me and saw the shell of my flesh and old nature embedded in those thorns. Then I looked at myself and I was pure white.

I find in celibacy that I am free to travel light, to run and climb as I explore the things of God. It's not easy, but God has led me through those thorns and brought me to the other side.

I now have a vision to serve the church of Jesus and lay my life down for her, longing to see her aflame with God's love. The fuel that keeps my heart burning is the close brotherhood relationships and the 'spiritual sons' I have found. Community and covenant have been my support in times of need.

For me celibacy is the ultimate challenge for anyone who wants to walk the highest way. It has brought a closeness to God and a burning zeal for the church. It is my life and means everything to me. My desire is to be like that corn of wheat that dies as it sows itself totally into the church and advances the kingdom of God on earth.

## Get protected - but don't get isolated

### A few practical hints and tips from a seasoned celibate...

- Believe in your calling – celibacy is you.
- Resolve to be fulfilled in ministry, relationship and knowing God.
- Single people of all ages have sexual temptations; so do marrieds. It is common to humanity to have to cope with them. Don't get hung up about it – the devil loves attention and problem centredness.
- Both marriage and celibacy are not an end in themselves. They are a means to ministry and building up the church. Celibacy is not for ego or ambition; marriage is not for self-gratification.
- Celibates need each other's friendship: don't get isolated.
- Celibacy releases the spirit because it is a 'sowing to the spirit'. Expect to know anointing of power in various ways because of your sacrifice.

## THE SAME HEART AS JESUS

"A TRUE celibate is someone who has exactly the same heart as Jesus who relinquished equality with God. He gave up His rights, His reputation, His office and, when it came to the cross, His power. He didn't weigh it up, He didn't say "I'll do this much and I'll expect this much back".

Jesus had an unlimited, dying devotion to the church. The true celibate has the same heart, vision and desire." *Quote from a brother in the Jesus Fellowship.*

## WORDS of inspiration



"CELIBACY is one of the signs that remind us of the absolute demands of Christ, of His liberating return, of the establishing of the Kingdom of heaven and of the need to be watchful, to renounce the world, the flesh and covetous desires and to welcome joyfully in our hearts the sacrifice of our passions in pure love for Jesus." (Max Thurian)

"CELIBACY is the most radical lifestyle one can imagine. It deals with a joy, lofty and deep. It is radical and beautiful. Though the world at large does not suspect it, celibacy is a love affair of the most enthralling type. It is focusing on God that fulfills as nothing else fulfills." (Thomas Dubay).



## FEEDBACK

**We are always pleased to hear from any who read 'Undivided' and will always try to answer any questions directed to the Editor. Address correspondence to: The Editor, Undivided, Jesus Fellowship Central Offices, Nether Heyford, Northants NN7 3LB or email: [huw.lewis@jesus.org.uk](mailto:huw.lewis@jesus.org.uk)**



## Have a look

The video, 'Why? Why Not?' Six men and women speak about what it means for them to have chosen to be celibate for God and the path that led them to make that decision.

**AVAILABLE NOW! From Jesus People Shop, Nether Heyford, Northampton NN7 3LB, UK**

**Tel: 0845 166 8172 [www.jesus.org.uk](http://www.jesus.org.uk)**



## Seven Silver Rings



An updated and enlarged Seven Silver Rings has been published. This includes new chapters on the history and biblical background to Celibacy as well as answering some of those frequently asked questions about living single for Jesus. Comprehensive and challenging, it sets out to show how a radical lifestyle of undivided love for Jesus and His church

is possible in the 21st century. This voluntary choice is far removed from the institutional forms of celibacy.



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