

Living in a Castle

Or Life as a Single?



Gena Suarez

Living in a Castle or Life as a Single?

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Introduction

Frankly, I did not care to serve my Lord as a single . . . My nose was poking over the fence into the "young married people's camp" wistfully gazing and dreaming. I was rendered useless for the Lord, and didn't even realize it.

When I was single, I had some very strange ideas. By the age of 16, all I ever thought about was marriage. A *man*, the perfect man, would rescue me from my lonesome existence, whisk me off my feet to a faraway castle, and we would live out our dreams together watching sunsets and eating strawberries dipped in white chocolate. No longer would I be bored. After all, being alone meant that I was stuck . . . with just me.

Do you know that as a teen I actually made a list/prayer card and then in some weird, ritualistic, sing-song way, burnt it in the trash as a little offering to the Lord? It was from me to God and was no less than my "order for a man" right off the menu, I suppose. Praise God that He doesn't abandon us in our absolute immaturity and absurdity. I cringe when I look back.


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As Time Goes By . . .

When I was 18 years old, I shamelessly begged God for a man I could call my own. I prayed relentlessly. God, please bring me a man. Here is a list for you, Lord. He needs to be strong and a Christian, of course. Be sure that he is handsome and, oh, tall would be nice. Can he have a good job? Oh, and as you know Lord, I don't care much for housework. Can he be one of those men who works hard both in and outside the home? Just a good smelling, hard working, tall, handsome Christian. Indeed, this will be all that I need to be happy. I just want to be happy.

At 19, I still longed for my prince. Life was a drag, thought I, without someone to call mine. Besides, it would be neat to have children something to cure me from my incessant boredom . . . of me.

Meeting My Prince

Still 19, I met Paul at one of those college youth groups, the kind that you attend in search of a mate . . . a Christian mate, of course. Now, I'll say here up front that my view of that group and Paul's were completely different. He was much older than me, almost the same age as the leaders. He was there to study God's word, counsel the younger men if needed, and


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support our leaders in their evangelistic efforts. Paul was not there looking for a mate. In fact, he was 30 years old and felt that the Lord had probably called him to remain single. He knew that God might use him more effectively for the Kingdom as a single man and was content in his position of service. There were times, naturally, that he was lonely. And occasionally, he prayed that if it were his Father's will, perhaps, it would be very good to have a wife. He *did not* pray, however, for a somewhat spastic, 19-year-old, desperate young woman.

I was tired of being single my whole life. Why didn't God take my little "prayer card burning thing" seriously? I was a real woman now, deserving respect, and should be married. What was wrong with me? Why sit around and wait another decade? A 19-year-old "woman" on a mad mission to marry . . . Yikes.

My eyes sank into Paul like a dart on a target board one night at a college youth holiday event. *Bull's eye*. There he was—handsome, strong looking, a godly man nose deep in God's word. What more could I need? My single days were OVER. I set out to make him mine.

Life in My Castle

God is very humorous at times. Once in a while we get just what we beg for, yet upon receiving the gift, it turns out to be completely different than what we had envisioned. Other times, He simply says, "No way." And, we do not get the thing we're crying for. In my case, shocking to me, I got exactly what I asked for. Paul and I had a big wedding (the story of our courtship is beyond ridiculous—that poor man!) and by about the third week of marriage, we were pregnant. Before I knew it, I was knee deep in four children, a husband and a whole lot of responsibility.

Praise God that my Heavenly Father knows me so well. I am thankful for what I have today because it is priceless. However, shame on me, for tossing the immense blessing of being single away from me like a dirty rag.

Finding Perspective

I finally received that over which I had obsessed. And up until the very day I walked down that aisle, all I could think about was HOW on earth I could get out of being single. Sadly, I never once took occasion to even think about what I should be doing as a single woman, a valuable tool of God. Frankly, I did not care to serve my Lord as a single. And subsequently, God didn't use me, because even though physically I was in the "singles camp" I was never there in spirit. My nose was poking over the fence into the "young married people's camp" wistfully gazing and dreaming. I was rendered useless for the Lord and didn't even realize it.

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Could I have been of use? Oh, my, yes! To be single is a great opportunity for service to our King. Rather than pining away thinking I was missing out on the best in life, I

could have been leading countless people to Christ, or at the very least, assisting in this Great Commission, but I failed.

1 Corinthians 7:28


But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.

God has let us know under no uncertain terms that this life is stressful enough, as it is, without tossing marriage into the mix.

Marriage is a beautiful blessing and I will never look back, particularly because I am one of the happy ones. Paul is my prince of twenty years and our castle is the home we make

together every day. But, I can't help but think back to my wasted days in


waiting. What if God's plan would have been for me to remain single, just serving Him, always? As a 39-year-old single woman today, what would I be like? Would I be bitter and lonely, old before my time, still completely steeped in my pursuit of self-fulfillment?


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To be discontent with my status, whether married or unmarried, is the same as shaking my angry fist at God. By neglecting my call as a single, I did just that. Praise God that He is merciful, patient, and loving.

It's not we who decide what fulfills us, it's our Father. He has a plan. My unmarried sisters in Christ are doing great things. While I, sometimes joyously, sometimes not, am home with my (now)


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five children, doing dishes with one hand and changing a diaper with the other.

They are off in the fields, reaping a glorious harvest. Before me, at age 19, were opportunities, which I carelessly threw away. I was too busy gawking over the fence at the married girls. And those

opportunities I once had are gone, as are the eternal blessings which would have accompanied them.

Being married is wonderful. Being single is just as wonderful. Praise the Lord who cares deeply about our every desire, our every need, and who will continue to work out His plan for our life despite our shameless pleas for what we think is best for us. Praise the Lord for our single sisters in Christ. They are accomplishing great things in His name and advancing the Kingdom of God for His glory.

Discussion Questions

1. Was it wrong for the author to desire marriage and a family?
2. Where do you think she went wrong?
3. What could/should she have done while awaiting the God-given desires of her heart?
4. How would you minister to another young woman you may see struggling this way?
5. How could you minister to yourself?

Further Resources

- ✓ [Shine](#), By Amy Rienow
- ✓ [Beyond Beautiful Girlhood Plus Companion Guide](#)
- ✓ [Becoming God's Bride Topical Bible Study](#) by Dana Susan Beasley
- ✓ [God's Girls Talk about Boys, Dating, Courtship, & Marriage Bible Study Workbook](#) by Meredith Curtis
- ✓ [Lovely to Behold: Godly Womanhood Bible Study Workbook](#) by Meredith Curtis



Gena Suarez and her husband Paul are the owners/publishers of The Old Schoolhouse® Magazine, LLC. Gena enjoys strong coffee, good books and spending long periods of time in the van with her family. Paul and Gena have five children, ages one and a half to 19, and they hope to have a few more if the Lord allows. Come find her at Facebook, or become a “fan” of TOS Magazine’s Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Gray-TN/The-Old-Schoolhouse-Magazine/42107471203>. To reach Gena: publisher@thehomeschoolmagazine.com.

Appendix

How to Begin Homeschooling

1. **Discuss With Your Spouse:** Educating your child at home is a huge decision and should be one that is made with your spouse. Do not begin unless you are in agreement about this decision. You will need the support of your spouse not only at the beginning, but also throughout the year.
2. **Research the Homeschool Laws Applicable in your Area:** Be fully aware of the legal requirements before you begin and especially before you take a child out of public school. For the U.S., each state's legal requirements can be found on the www.HomeschoolLegal.com website. Internationally, refer to www.HSLDA.org.
3. **Research Styles of Home Education:** There is no single right way to educate your child at home; however, there are many differing philosophies you may want to consider.
 - **Charlotte Mason:** Based on a method introduced by nineteenth-century educator Charlotte Mason, this approach includes nature studies/journaling, narration, and living books.
 - **Classical:** Based on Dorothy Sayers' *The Lost Tools of Learning*, in which child development is broken up into three "stages" of learning commonly called "the Trivium."
 - **Delight Directed:** This puts the learning in the hands of the child, based on his or her interests. Parents help facilitate this type of learning with appropriate instructional materials.
 - **Eclectic:** A mix of philosophies and curricula to accommodate each child's abilities and interests. Parents choose from any method or style only those components that fit their specific needs.
 - **The Principle Approach:** An approach based on the principles of our Founding Fathers and an emphasis on God's Word as the basis for every subject.
 - **Traditional Textbook:** Normally uses a full-range, packaged, textbook-type curriculum that also may include a scope and sequence, testing, and recordkeeping.
 - **Unit Studies:** All or most core subjects are covered while studying any one topic or unit of study, using a variety of resources and supplemental activities.
 - **Unschooling:** A relaxed setting where learning is directed by the child. Parts of this philosophy are based on research by John Taylor Gatto and John Holt.

- 4. Find Support:** After finding your style of choice (or a mix of more than one choice), you may want to choose a support group that reflects that specific style or just a general homeschool support group in your area. Meeting with other home educators offers encouragement as well as knowledge and assistance with your homeschool questions. Often, organized classes or activities for your children are offered through support groups as well. For information about homeschool support groups in your area, check these listings:

U.S.:

www.TheHomeschoolMagazine.com/Homeschool_Nations/State_Listings.php
www.HomeschoolLegal.com

UK:

<http://www.home-service.org/>
<http://www.heas.org.uk/>

New Zealand:

<http://www.che.org.nz/>
<http://hef.org.nz/>
<http://www.ahe.org.nz/>
<http://www.homeschoolers.wellington.net.nz/>
<http://community.library.org.nz/cgi-bin/display.pl?id=296>

Guam:

www.HomeschoolBlogger.com/guam
<http://www.tumon.com/ghsa>

Australia:

<http://www.hea.asn.au/hea/>

Canada:

www.shbe.info
www.machs.mb.ca
www.aheaonline.com
<http://nshea.webcentre.ca/>
<http://www.eho.org/support/canada.asp>

- 5. Gather Resources:** Some families start with a complete curriculum package, while others start with a notebook and a library card. Choosing your resources depends on your style or method of education and your own interests. If you are financially burdened, there are free homeschooling resources on the web, as well as discounted, used books in abundance.

You Can Do This! Parents around the world are taking back their God-given responsibility to educate their children, and you can too. We have developed two downloads to help you get started:

- ✓ [Homeschool With Confidence](#)
- ✓ [Simple Recipes for Successful Homeschooling](#)

Disclaimer: The above information is not intended as legal advice and should not be construed as such. Please check the legal requirements in your area.

To a Homeschool Mom **By Amelia Harper**

He gave this gift with gentle hands,
A treasure rich and rare;
But sand and rock and rugged stone
Obscured the gem so fair.

“I give this gift to you,” He said,
“To polish and to prime;
The future lies within your hands,
So make use of the time.”

Some others placed their precious gifts
Within another’s care,
Because they knew the craft took time—
And time they could not spare.

But you were not content to trust
This task to other hands.
You sought to teach yourself the craft
That such a task demands.

For, you said, “No other hand
Can craft this gem so fair;
My loving eyes can better see
The treasure hidden there.”

So carefully you chipped away
Till brilliance sprang from stone.
You shaped each facet, smoothed each face,
Until the task was done.

Some days you feared that you would fail;
Some days, you saw success.
But still you labored on with love
And gentle tenderness.

Thus, soon the gem He gave to you
Reflected Light sublime;
And then you knew no other task
Was better worth your time.

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