

“In *Single Ever After*, Dani Treweek offers a hopeful, helpful guide through a topic still viewed with much suspicion or sadness, or both. She leads her readers through rich biblical, theological, and personal territory to point to God’s positive vision for the single life: a vision that is an encouragement to both single and married disciples. The New Testament loves to call Christians ‘brothers and sisters in Christ’, and this book helps us grow into that reality, which is so much more than mere metaphor.”

**RACHEL GILSON**, Author, *Born Again This Way: Coming Out, Coming to Faith, and What Comes Next*

“This hit the spot: fresh turns of phrase, deep theological reflection and lots of pastoral wisdom. How can anyone do all three at once? Whether thinking about individual biblical texts or awkward scenarios over coffee after church, Dani Treweek guides us in our concerns about singleness, sex and marriage delicately and deliberately towards our heavenly home. May our churches be beacons of relational hope in an anxious world!”

**RHYS BEZZANT**, Principal, Ridley College, Australia;  
Visiting Fellow, Yale Divinity School

“Too many single women and men have been harmed by badly understood and applied Bible teaching on singleness, marriage and sex. Dani does us all a massive favour by returning to the key texts and understanding and applying them in life-giving ways. The positive vision of singleness that results needs to be heard not just by single Christians but by their pastors and friends. All of this comes well wrapped in eye-opening personal stories, Dani’s good sense of humour, and her years of listening well to God and his people. This book is a much-needed gift to our churches today.”

**ED SHAW**, Pastor, Emmanuel City Centre, Bristol, UK;  
Ministry Director, [www.livingout.org](http://www.livingout.org);  
Author, *The Intimacy Deficit*

“As a ‘never-married, older single person’, I have read my fair share of books on singleness. For me, this one is the best of the bunch! It has a depth of theology, alongside a warmth and humour, which wonderfully engages the heart and the mind. Reading Dani’s book felt like sitting down with a wise friend and listening as she reminds us of God’s goodness and grace in whatever context he places us. Whether you’re single or married, this one’s a winner!”

**JENNY SALT**, Associate to Archdeacon of Women’s Ministry,  
Sydney Anglican Diocese; Podcast host, *Salt—Conversations*  
with Jenny

“Provocative and pastoral, *Single Ever After* offers a fresh way of thinking about singleness: not as a death sentence but as a signpost to the resurrection life that followers of Jesus will enjoy with him forever! Whether you are single or married, I highly recommend you grab a copy of this book. It’s urgent that we start to think better and more biblically about both singleness and marriage, and *Single Ever After* could be just the shot in the arm we need!”

**REBECCA MCLAUGHLIN**, Author, *Confronting Christianity: 12*  
*Hard Questions for the World’s Largest Religion*

“*Single Ever After* gives a gloriously good vision for singleness here and now by pointing to how it foreshadows how all Christians will live for eternity. While being realistic about the challenges and sorrows of singleness, Dani shows how it is intrinsically good. Her exposition of 1 Corinthians was clear and profoundly encouraging, which is not often how this passage feels to singles. *Single Ever After* is essential reading for church leaders as they consider how to care for those in their church who are single and single-again.”

**RACHEL SLOAN**, Director for Women’s Ministry, Fellowship  
of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC), UK

# Single Danielle Treweek Ever After



*For all my single brothers and sisters who it has been a  
privilege to know in this life...*

*And for all those I'm looking forward to getting to know in  
the ever after to come.*

Single Ever After  
© Danielle Treweek, 2025

Published by:  
The Good Book Company



[thegoodbook.com](http://thegoodbook.com) | [thegoodbook.co.uk](http://thegoodbook.co.uk)  
[thegoodbook.com.au](http://thegoodbook.com.au) | [thegoodbook.co.nz](http://thegoodbook.co.nz)

Unless indicated, all Scripture references are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright © 2011 Biblica, Inc. Used by permission. Emphasis added is the author's own.

All rights reserved. Except as may be permitted by the Copyright Act, no part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means without prior permission from the publisher.

Danielle Treweek has asserted her right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 to be identified as author of this work.

Cover design by Drew McCall

ISBN: 9781802543261 | JOB-008254 | Printed in India

# Contents

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>Introduction: I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For</b> | 9   |
| <b>1. Waiting On the World To Change</b>                        |     |
| <i>Specialising in Eternity</i>                                 | 13  |
| <i>Living It Out</i>  | 23  |
| <b>2. All by Myself</b>   |     |
| <i>The Not-Goodness of Adam's Aloneness</i>                     | 33  |
| <i>Living It Out</i>  | 45  |
| <b>3. The Wind Beneath My Wings</b>                             |     |
| <i>Unwrapping the Gift of Singleness</i>                        | 53  |
| <i>Living It Out</i>  | 65  |
| <b>4. It's My Life</b>  |     |
| <i>The Complexity of Choice and Circumstance</i>                | 75  |
| <i>Living It Out</i>  | 89  |
| <b>5. Be Thou My Vision</b>                                     |     |
| <i>Being Distracted Versus Being Devoted</i>                    | 99  |
| <i>Living It Out</i>  | 111 |
| <b>6. Let's Talk About Sex</b>                                  |     |
| <i>Both More and Less Than You Think</i>                        | 119 |
| <i>Living It Out</i>  | 131 |
| <b>7. Say No to This</b>  |     |
| <i>Burning with Passion</i>                                     | 141 |
| <i>Living It Out</i>  | 153 |

|                                    |     |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| <b>Conclusion: Time After Time</b> | 165 |
| Chapter Titles Quiz                | 169 |
| Endnotes                           | 171 |



## Introduction

# **I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For**

**I**f, 25 years ago, you had told me that there'd come a day when I'd have a PhD in singleness, two books on the topic and a ministry devoted to it... *and* that I'd still be single myself, I'd have politely insisted that you clearly had the wrong Dani. And then I'd probably have run from the room.

Like most Christian teens and young adults, I grew up expecting to get married. Becoming a wife and a mother seemed wonderfully inevitable—the natural and expected path for my life. And yet, as I now settle into what I prefer to think of as “prime time” rather than middle age, that path hasn't materialised. Instead, here I am: a Doctor of Singleness.

While so many of my friends seemed to move seamlessly through first meetings, awkward conversations, dating, engagements, weddings, honeymoons and baby announcements, it just never happened for me. Despite my best hopes, prayers and efforts, single I remained.

I didn't quite know what to do with that. And honestly, it seemed that nobody else did either. As my twenties turned into my thirties, I tried to make sense of being single in a church culture that seemed to idealise—at times even idolise—marriage and family. But the sermons, books, podcasts, conferences and conversations all seemed to point to the same conclusion: there simply was little purpose to Christian singleness. At best, it could be put to good use in filling up the church rosters. At worst, it was treated as an unmitigated tragedy.

My dissatisfaction with this state of affairs became even more pronounced once I began to serve in vocational women's ministry. Never-married women, divorced women, widows and single mothers—there were far more of them in the pews than I had ever realised. These women (along with their male counterparts, who were fewer in number but nonetheless very much present) were grappling with the same longing for belonging in their singleness that I was. They would come to me, hoping I had the answers. I didn't.

And yet, when I opened the Bible, I could see that it had plenty to say on the subject.

Passages like 1 Corinthians 7 celebrate singleness. Our Saviour lived and loved on earth as a single man. The apostle responsible for authoring about half of the New Testament was unmarried. While Scripture beautifully honours marriage, it devotes even greater attention to the relationships between brothers and sisters in the household of God. And the thing that most captured my spiritual imagination was Jesus' promise that in the resurrection age *none* of us would be married to one another. According to him, we will all be "single" ever after (Matthew 22:29-30).

I could see that God's word didn't just speak to the topic of singleness—it spoke to me in *my* singleness. I was

confident that there *were* God-given answers to be had about my purpose and place of belonging as an unmarried Christian. And so, I went searching for those answers.

This book is (part of) the fruit of that search.

Each chapter explores a particular conception—or, more often, misconception—about singleness in the Christian life and community. We'll examine *what* Christians today tend to think about singleness, marriage, sex, friendship, church and more; *why* we think what we think; and *how* the Bible compels us to reshape or reorient aspects of our thinking.

But this isn't just a book about thinking. It's also a book about living. And so, the "Living It Out" discussion that follows each chapter is designed to help translate biblical truths into relational action (meaning that the two parts are best read together). In each of those, we'll consider how a truly biblical view of singleness might nurture and transform our relationships with Jesus and with others.

All of which means that this book is for both the 20-year-old single Christian excited about the prospect of marriage and also the 40-year-old who wonders if it will ever happen. It's for the 32-year-old divorced single father and the 69-year-old widowed grandmother. It's for those eagerly anticipating marriage and those grieving its absence; it's for those single by choice and those single by circumstance; it's for the content, the discontent, and those who feel both—sometimes, like me, at the very same time.

But this book isn't just for singles. It's also for their married friends and their church pastors. If that's you, I'm so glad you're reading these words. We, your single brothers and sisters, need your support as we seek to live for Jesus. We need your help to live out our singleness within our church family faithfully. We need you to love us well in our singleness and to help us love you well in it, too.

All of that requires you to not only understand singleness itself but to understand *us in our singleness*.

Finally, this is a book about singleness but for everyone because, while only some of us will remain single—or become single again—in this life, in the eternal life to come, all of God's people will be *Single Ever After*.



# Waiting On the World to Change

## Part 1: Specialising in Eternity

**A** few years ago, I came across a terrarium for purchase online. It was a glass jar, about the size and shape of a fishbowl. Inside it lay a gorgeous miniature landscape of a live-moss-covered cliff covered in a few scattered plastic palm trees. Blue resin waves broke over synthetic rocks at the cliff's base. Okay, yes, it was almost entirely artificial. But as soon as the algorithms brought it up on my social-media feed, well, I couldn't look away. And gee whiz, what do you know? I just so happened to have a birthday in a few weeks' time.

And so, I oh-so-casually showed it to my family. My sister was sceptical and with good reason. She knew my poor track record at keeping any kind of green thing alive. My mother was a little confused by my new-found preoccupation with terrariums. Nonetheless, I could tell that she was dutifully picking up on the hints that I was not so subtly laying down. But for his part, my ever practically minded father looked at the picture for a bit

before turning to me with a quizzical frown and asking, “Okay, but, well, what does it actually *do*?”

### **What Does Singleness Actually Do?**

If you are an unmarried Christian, I imagine there has been a time (perhaps many times) when you’ve looked at your singleness and thought to yourself, “Okay, but, well, what does it actually do? What is it good for?” Perhaps you have even wondered, “What am I good for?” We’ve been taught that God has his purposes in every area of our lives—but it’s hard to figure out what they are in this.

If you’ve found yourself confronted by these kinds of questions, you’re not alone. As a never-married woman, I’ve often wondered what the point of my singleness is. And I know many other single men and women—never-married, divorced and widowed—who wrestle with the same questions and anxieties.

Why am I single (or single again)?

Why am I the only one of my friends who somehow ended up without a spouse, kids, a family to call my own?

What are other people thinking about my singleness? Do they pity me? Regard me with suspicion? Think that it’s a shame?

Why do I feel so alone in trying to understand the purpose of my situation? *Is there even a purpose?*

Those are some of the questions that this chapter—and this book—will seek to answer.

But first, we need to consider some of the ways in which we’re prone to get this wrong. For example, a few years ago, the Christian multimedia platform *Relevant* published an online article called “Singleness Is Not a Problem That Needs to Be Fixed”. The article begins with these words:

*If you're a Christian, older than 22 and single, odds are things are weird for you sometimes. Intentionally or not, the Church seems to have expectations, and even a timeline, for when people who are single will grow up and get married. If we operate outside of that trajectory, we are often treated as if we have some sort of problem. You'd think there was some hidden Scripture that says, "Thou shall be marriedeth by this time, or thou be a freak."<sup>1</sup>*

The author goes on to say that singleness "can be a gift from God. That's right ... Not a curse. Not a source of pity. Not a problem".

But, what exactly is it about singleness that leads him to see it as a gift rather than a problem? Well, he suggests that single people not only avoid the "challenges" of marriage, but they also have more energy and time for ministry. In other words, the purpose of singleness is having more time to do more of the good things you have more energy to do... all because you aren't dealing with the hard stuff of marriage.

This is what I call an "instrumental" understanding of singleness. Not "instrument" like a guitar or a piano but instead like a fork or a shovel. That is, singleness is seen as a tool that has a specific utility. It is something that helps you *do* a particular thing.

While this instrumental approach to singleness is on view in that *Relevant* article, it is certainly not unique to it. In fact, this has been the dominant understanding of singleness throughout the Protestant church of the West for centuries. We tend not to think that singleness has meaning in and of itself, but just that it can be meaningfully spent. Which also means that when we see someone who does not seem to be using their singleness "properly", well, we think that they aren't

“doing singleness” right—that they are missing the point of their being unmarried.

To borrow (and somewhat adapt) the words of that *Relevant* article, *You’d think there was some hidden Scripture that says, “Thou shall be marriedeth by this time, or spending thy singleness in ways others deemeth good. Otherwise, thou art a selfish sinner who is putting off their cleareth duty to marry post-haste.”*

### **Intrinsic Versus Instrumental**

Now, you might be thinking, “Well, surely singleness is good because it gives you more time and energy and focus to serve God!” And, yes, singleness is good because of all the gospel-oriented ways in which we can serve through it. Yet, singleness is not only *instrumentally* good. It is also *intrinsically* good. And we only need to look to marriage to understand the difference.

Christians have long held that God designed marriage to fulfil some very important purposes or “goods”. Procreation is a good of marriage. Intimacy and faithful companionship is another. Marriage’s role as a relational anchor within our broader social order is yet another still.

People throughout church history have used different words to describe these goods, and the lines between them can be a little blurry at times, but the point is this: Christians have always believed that the goods of marriage mean that each marital relationship is *instrumentally* significant. To put it plainly, we see marriage as being useful for individuals, households, communities and societies as a whole.

But our understanding of marriage doesn’t stop there, because we don’t only believe marriage *provides* important goods but that it also *is* an important good. We believe marriage is a good in and of itself. The Bible teaches that



the ultimate purpose of marriage is not found in what we do with our individual marital unions but in what that one-flesh union itself is purposed for:

*“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.*

*(Ephesians 5:31-32, quoting Genesis 2:24)*

As Paul wrote to the Ephesian Christians about the relationship between a husband and wife, he referred them back to the very first teaching on marriage—indeed the very first instance of marriage—in Scripture. But then Paul does something rather unexpected. He says that the profound mystery that Genesis 2:24 is really talking about is not ultimately about human husbands and wives at all! Instead, marriage is and has always been about Christ and the church.

Right back at the very beginning, God designed human marriage to have a purpose. It was to act as a preview, a signpost, a foreshadowing of the better, greater, more wonderful and more enduring union to come—the marriage between Christ and the church. Paul takes his readers back to creation to explain that truth. But the author of Revelation takes us forward to the new creation to make precisely the same point. In his vision of that new creation, John hears a great multitude shouting:

*Hallelujah!*

*For our Lord God Almighty reigns.*

*Let us rejoice and be glad  
and give him glory!*

*For the wedding of the Lamb has come,  
and his bride has made herself ready.*

*Fine linen, bright and clean,  
was given her to wear. (Revelation 19:6-8)*

A little later, John describes seeing the new Jerusalem, “coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband” (Revelation 21:2). Who is the bride—this new Jerusalem? It is the church, the people of God. And who is the husband waiting at the end of the heavenly aisle? It is Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.

This, if we stop to think about it, may all sound a little weird. But that’s only because we’ve not yet come to experience the full reality of it. And this is exactly why earthly marriage is so important. The relationship between a husband and wife is meant to provide us with a glimpse of the uniquely exclusive, deeply intimate and lovingly faithful union that God’s people—together as the church—will one day enjoy with our Saviour. Marriage points beyond itself to foreshadow something greater than itself: the ultimate marriage to come.

And so human marriage doesn’t just *do* good things here and now, like enabling child-bearing and strengthening the social order. No, it *is* itself a good thing because it is designed to point to something beyond itself. It has what we might call an *intrinsic* meaning and purpose that go beyond the here and now. Marriage’s ultimate meaning is found in its eternal end.

However, we don’t tend to think the same way about singleness. We’re happy to say that singleness can achieve good things here and now. But we don’t usually see singleness as having a meaning or significance beyond that—as having its own eternal end.

This can leave those of us who are single feeling that our life situation is only a good thing if we are constantly making sure we do all the right stuff with it. And so,

having a purely instrumental view of singleness can rob us of any joy or dignity in simply being unmarried. It can also mean that other Christians deem our singleness not to be a good thing if, in their eyes, we're not doing enough of all that good stuff with it. That is, they may think there isn't any joy or dignity in simply being unmarried.

On that count, Jesus Christ himself shows us that we are wrong.

### **We're All Gonna Be "Single" For Ever**

The Gospel author Matthew records an encounter between Jesus and a group of Jewish religious leaders called the Sadducees. As a child, I was taught the Sadducees were "sad, you see" because they didn't believe in life after death—a cringeworthy but undeniably memorable pun! This meant that they were a little perturbed by this Jesus fellow going around teaching Jews about a future day of resurrection for all God's people. So, they come up with a clever plan to entrap him by using the hypothetical story of a very unfortunate woman:

*"Teacher," they said, "Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for him. Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother. The same thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down to the seventh. Finally, the woman died. Now then, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?"*

*(Matthew 22:24-28)*

The story is a kind of overblown riddle intended to back Jesus into an intellectual corner. You can almost imagine

the Sadducees standing before him with raised eyebrows and smug smirks: *So, Jesus, if this life after death you are going on about is real, try and get yourself out of this!* But of course, Jesus is unfazed. He replies:

*You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. (v 29-30)*

The Sadducees had made a foolish mistake. They had assumed that the resurrection age Jesus was preaching about would be exactly like this age—at least with respect to marriage. Jesus tells them that this is a false assumption. At the resurrection, this hypothetical woman would not be married to *any* of those men. Why? Because resurrected people will neither marry nor be given in marriage.

Jesus couldn't have simply meant there wouldn't be any new marriages in the resurrection age. If that was the case, the Sadducees' question about which of the men she'd call her husband would still stand. No, in the resurrection age, there will be *no* marriage of any kind between men and women. Instead, we will be like the angels—that is, we will not marry, we will not have sex and we will not procreate. The new creation will not be filled with many wives and husbands. Instead there will be one husband (Jesus) and one wife (the church).

So, if we will not be husbands and wives to each other, what *will* we be? Well, the New Testament shows us that the primary relationship Jesus' people will share then is the same one we share now—we will be each other's brothers and sisters in Christ. In fact, the New Testament describes us now as each other's siblings over 180 times—including in John's vision of heaven in Revelation (6:11). This familial connection is not temporary or for this

earth only. According to Scripture, “those who believed in [Jesus’] name” have been given “the right to become children of God” (John 1:12-13). Those who have been made God’s children for eternity have also been made each other’s siblings for eternity. And so, in the time that comes after time, the enduring relationships of resurrected men and women won’t be those of husbands and wives but of brothers and sisters in Christ.

You, I, all of us... we are gonna be *single* siblings. Forever. This means that it is not just marriage that acts as a signpost towards eternity. Because of who we now are in Jesus, singleness also points us towards a *different aspect* of the future reality that awaits us. Those of us who are not married *now* are living, breathing, walking, talking examples of the relational life that awaits us all in the new creation.

Now, of course, there is a sense in which *all* Christians are already living the relational life awaiting us in the age to come. We are all already brothers and sisters to each other. But those of us who are unmarried have a kind of leg-up in that department. Unlike our married counterparts, we already experience the kind of relational life that doesn’t include one unique and exclusive relationship with one other person. We already relate to *all* other Christians as simply brother or sister. Our relational lives here and now most closely resemble the relational life among God’s people to come there and then.

Certainly, we are not yet perfected examples of that coming reality. For that, we all need to wait for Jesus to return. And yet, as those with no exclusive, one-flesh relationship with another person in this life, our lives provide unique glimpses of the relational life we’ll share with all other sons and daughters of God on the other side of resurrection day.

All of this means that married and single Christians *both* specialise in depicting eternity.

### **Specialising in Eternity... Together**

Just as one medical doctor's speciality might be in dermatology while another's is in cardiology, married and single Christians have a different speciality focus. The married Christian specialises in pointing us towards the gloriously intimate relationship which the church (that is, all of us together) will enjoy with Christ for ever. The unmarried Christian specialises in pointing us towards the gloriously intimate relationships we will enjoy with one another within the church for ever. We are complementary—rather than competing—co-specialists in eternity.

We so often get this wrong. For some reason, we tend to think of marriage and singleness as opponents. We think that to speak honourably about one means we must diminish the honour of the other. We think that to say one is good means we must automatically mean the other is less good.

But the glorious future awaiting us is one in which marriage and singleness will perfectly co-exist. The church will delight in her marriage to Christ, and we, as individual members of the church, will delight in our unmarried relationships with one another. Both situations are instrumentally good in this life. And both situations are intrinsically good because of the life to come.

So Jesus' people who are married and Jesus' people who are single are not opponents or adversaries. Rather, they are brothers and sisters who need one another to help keep their eyes fixed on the full glory of the resurrection life ahead. Married and single Christians are both God's co-specialists in depicting eternity.