

ABUNDANCE, OPPORTUNITY & PURPOSE IN GOD

ANDREW FARMER

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THE RICH SINGLE LIFE
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FOREWORD by Joshua Harris

A friend recently gave me a humorous greeting card. The front read, “I’m thinking of starting a new support group: Non-Daters Anonymous.” On the inside was written “Meetings will be held Friday and Saturday night. B.Y.O.C.” (Bring Your Own Chocolate) I laughed when I read it, but was saddened by the not-so-subtle message. Singleness, this card was saying, is something to grieve over. We should weep, feel sorry for ourselves, and attempt to drown out the pain in twice-weekly feasts of fudge.

In a day when singleness is often viewed by Christians and non-Christians alike as if it were an empty bus station in the middle of nowhere, the biblical teaching that any season of singleness is a gift from God can sound ridiculous. “Singleness is a gift? Did you save the receipt?!”

I’m excited to introduce this book because it is decidedly not a “Bring Your Own Chocolate” pity-party. Andy Farmer skillfully shows singles what a valuable opportunity they have. Single Christian men and women are to take full advantage of singleness, not devise ways to escape it.

The Rich Single Life is going to help you for two important reasons. First, it’s soaked in Scripture. Its starting point isn’t merely the author’s experience or lots of testimonies and stories (though you’ll find some of both). Instead, he’s drawing truth from the Bible and helping us apply that truth to our lives.

Second, and most refreshingly, this book doesn’t encourage you to find your identity in your singleness. Thank God! The last thing the world needs is another book that makes singles feel more isolated and dissatisfied, as if we were a separate species of humanity. *The Rich Single Life* will help you see yourself as God sees you—as his child who, by his grace that strengthens you, can do all things.

Finally, Andy’s insights will help you find contentment by giving you perspective—God’s perspective. Remember, true contentment doesn’t hinge on getting what we think will bring happiness. Someone has said, “Contentment is not the fulfillment of what you want, but the realization of how much you already have.” It’s true. Whether you’re nineteen and single or fifty-five and single, or whether you’ve known the trauma of divorce or the challenges of being a single parent, remember that contentment is a state of trust before God, not a destination at which we may one day arrive. When we focus on a destination (getting married, having kids, owning a home, etc.) as the source of our contentment, it never arrives, because we’re always looking for it somewhere off in the future.

I believe the truths contained in this book could revolutionize people’s understanding of singleness. Then our motto could be “S.I.A.G.” — “Singleness Is A Gift.” By God’s grace, let’s enjoy it to the fullest. Someone has said, “You don’t need to do something about your singleness, you need to do something *with* it.”

The book you’re holding will help you “do something with” your singleness. And this “something” will not only bring rich experience. It will bring glory to God.

June, 1998

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The Rich Single Life, like each book in the Pursuit of Godliness series, is designed for group and individual use. The series is the logical outgrowth of four deeply held convictions:

- The Bible is our infallible standard for faith, doctrine, and practice. Those who resist its authority will be blown off course by their own feelings and cultural trends.
- Knowledge without application is lifeless. In order to be transformed, we must apply and practice the truth of God's Word in daily life.
- Application of these principles is impossible apart from the Holy Spirit. While we must participate in change, he is the source of our power.
- The church is God's intended context for change. God never intended for us to live isolated from or independent of other Christians. Through committed participation in the local church, we find instruction, encouragement, correction, and opportunities to press on toward maturity in Christ.

As you work through these pages, we trust each of these foundational convictions will be reinforced in your heart.

With the possible exception of the "Group Discussion" questions, the format of this book is equally suited for individuals and small groups. A variety of different elements have been included to make each chapter as interesting and helpful as possible. For those of you who can't get enough of a particular topic, we've listed at the end of each chapter one or more additional books that will help you grow in the Lord.

While you are encouraged to experiment in your use of this book, group discussion will be better served when members work through the material in advance. And remember that you're not going through this book alone. The Holy Spirit is your tutor. With his help, this book has the potential to change your life.

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