



Jesus, Single Like Me: Leadership by Compassion
by Kris Swiatocho

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article is part of the Jesus . . . Single Like Me series.

Jesus lived his life as a single adult till his death. Because he lived his life as a single adult, he understands every aspect of what you and I are experiencing today. This series examines the "singleness" of Christ in relation to our singleness with the hope you will be encouraged to walk this journey you have been given. A journey that not only leads to the cross for our salvation but to his resurrection for our future.

Many years ago when my niece Keely was five years old we were playing Barbies. I had grown tired of playing Barbies as the plot was always the same. She wanted the Barbies to share what their names were and that they were going to the ball and what they would be wearing. So one day I decided to mix things up a bit. I decided I would not go along with her role playing and instead responded in ways I knew she wouldn't like. As she presented her Barbie to me she said, "Hello, my name is Anna. What is your name?" I said, "I don't feel like telling you my name." Keely then looked at me with a surprised expression. She then proceeded to say, "What are you going to wear to the ball?" I said, "I'm not going to no stinking ball." She gasped and hesitantly said, "I'm going to wear this dress," as she twirled her Barbie around. "You're going to wear that ugly dress?" I asked.

Then Keely said something that was totally unexpected and shocked me. She said, "You're just acting like a lost person. You need Jesus." I was like, "What?" (realizing what she had said but asking for clarification to make sure she knew what she was saying). She repeated, "You're just acting like a lost person. You need Jesus." Then she took her Barbie's little hands and laid them on my Barbie's shoulders and prayed, "Jesus, help her." I was like, "What?" She then seemed frustrated and ran and got the only boy doll she had, Woody from Toy Story (a.k.a. a substitute pastor), and he laid hands on me. The next thing I knew she was running the bath and told me my Barbie was going to get baptized. I just rolled in laughter.

You see, what I learned that day was not only did Keely see, listen and repeat what she had seen her father and mother do, but she took it a step further. She had compassion. She cared about me (Barbie) and my behavior, and she was concerned that I was lost due to my behavior. Keely had learned from her parents (as her leaders) what real ministry is about. Leading people only by telling them what they need to be doing isn't enough. You have to first live it yourself by walking with folks daily. You have to show you really care by spending time with people—so that as you spend time together, you build trust and this trust will allow you to not only be in people's lives but promote healthy changes for Christ.

Jesus Single Like Me has showed over and over and over again his compassion for others. Below are three different stories of his compassion and what I have learned as a leader.

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him. While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"

On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice. For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners'" (Matt. 9:9-13).

Jesus Single Like Me Teaches:

1. People have gifts that we might not see at first.



God called Matthew to be his disciple. A man who probably had about as much compassion as my left pinky. A tax collector whose friends were other tax collectors and "sinners." Men who sat around at night talking about the ignorant and gullible people. Men who counted their money and thinking of the things they would buy with it. Men who were despised by others. But Jesus saw something different in Matthew. He saw a man who would be capable of loving others, of putting others first, of doing whatever it took to share the gospel, of doing what was right. Jesus taught me that through my own compassion for a "sinner" I need to wait on God to develop them. I need to wait on God for what he plans to do with them. As a leader, there are so many singles who I have a hard time loving. But then God reminds me that I was hard to love at one time and someone waited on God for me.

2. What his real purpose on this earth was, and what mine is.

My purpose is relationship that glorifies God and out of this relationship, a relationship with others to bring them to Christ. It is not the saved, the ones right with God, who we are here for. It is the ones who are not saved, the ones who are saved but have fallen away. We are here to reach those singles who are sporadic. Those singles who are on drugs, beating their girlfriends, abusing their kids. We are here to help those single moms and dads, provide a meal, listen to them when their boyfriend has broken up with them, etc. We are here to pray for them, comfort and love them into the body of Christ. Just like Jesus . . . I have come for the sick. Sick emotionally, physically, mentally, sociably and ultimately spiritually.

3. That he requires mercy, not sacrifice:

There are so many "Christians" trying to work themselves to heaven. Whether it's by a well-meaning denomination or by our own misunderstandings of what grace means, we find ourselves trying to please God by what we do for him. We get into legalistic prayer routines, tithing to the exact 10 percent, serving beyond exhaustion (being the first and last at church) and overly making ourselves available to help wherever, whenever. Now please don't get me wrong. We are to work for the Lord. We are to do things excellently. We are to be great stewards of what he has given us. But never in the Word does it say, "Do this in order to please me. Do this to get to heaven. Do this so that I will love you." Instead, it is by our relationship, by our understanding of who Jesus is and by our understanding who we are in him. It comes naturally to serve, not out of guilt, but out of our faith and our love for the Lord and his love for us. Christ already was the ultimate sacrifice for us so we wouldn't have to be. He is not asking us to be on the cross. He is asking us to love others as he loves us because of the cross.

4. That Jesus wants us to learn as we live it.

He said to go and learn what he was teaching. A large part of learning how to be a great leader for the Lord is on-the-job training. You can read all the John Maxwell books there are, and you will never truly understand what it is to be a leader until you actually do it. Jesus Single Like Me developed his leadership skills starting at a young age. He then got to practice for many years. From leading his friends to his siblings to eventually the disciples, he practiced learning how to be a great leader. As you lead your singles, allow mistakes to happen. Be open to share when you have made a mistake. Take the time to learn from those God has entrusted to you.

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matt. 9:35-38).

5. That he paid attention to those around him as he ministered.

As he did the work of God, just like us in our daily lives (whether secular or faith-based), we need to be observant of



who needs our help. One of the things I ask my single leaders to do is to pray each day for God to give them a "God-Incident." This means as you pray each morning, ask God to interact with you. Pray for opportunities to share your faith. Pray to see, experience and hear from God today. What is so amazing is if you say it each morning, you will begin to look for what you prayed for. Now what is crazy is that God has been trying to get your attention all along. He has given you a ton of opportunities to pray for someone and speak or share your faith. He asks you to stop and give someone a hug, thank him for something he has just showed you or to stop texting while you are driving. Jesus speaks to us all day. Sometimes, we are so busy with our agenda that we don't notice or hear. Jesus Single Like Me shows me the need to look around me, to see those who are hurting, who need someone to listen, who are being mistreated by others. What people has God put in your path who he wants you to talk with? What singles in your ministry, your church, has God asked you to get to know? It has to start with being available to God to be used.

6. We aren't to do it alone.

We are not the "angel police" thinking it's all on us to be everyone's helper, listener, encourager, provider, supporter and so on. God has called us as leaders to give the ministry away. To teach others by our example. To show, guide, pray for, teach and equip those to do the work together. Many hands make a load light. But know there will always be more to do than we have workers. This is not the point; that is God's problem. Our problem is that our "ministries" and our "relationship with God" is not about us. It's about others and bringing folks to the Lord. We know in numbers there is strength and there is power. We know the enemy hates numbers. That is why he constantly tries to get us alone. That is why the enemy loves singles 'cause most of us are living alone. He salivates as he plans his next attack. If he can just get us by ourselves and thinking it's about me and trying to do it all alone. If he can just make us question our calling, our direction and our faith. If he can make us think that no one cares so why should we. Guys, we need each other to not only battle the enemy but to keep us going to keep doing what God has called us to do. Plus, we can learn a whole lot about each other.

A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured (Mark 1:40-42).

7. Don't give up. Not every single will get it.

Being a singles leader/pastor can sometime be very tough. We reach out, we feed, we clothe, we give money, we cry, we get people out of jail, we stay at the hospital, etc. Then comes the constant counseling, listening and sharing. And sometimes they still don't get it. Sometimes it seems our work was in vain as these singles fall right back into bad relationships, losing another job, doing drugs, and so on. And we wonder if it's time to just quit. No, it's not time to quit because there are some who are just like this man that Jesus cured of leprosy. There will come a time when those singles will get tired of living the life they are living. They will get tired of their bad choices, of living in sin, of feeling horrible. Just like this man who didn't ask for another handout. For money to pay his rent, or food on his table or someone to listen to his problems. He finally figured out what he needed. To be clean, to be saved. This is our hope that all of those you have loved, who you have had compassion for, will one day come to you and say: "I want my life to change. I'm tired of living with the disease of poverty, of drugs, of low self-esteem, of anger, of hatred or apathy. I need to be washed to be cleaned." And you can show them to the Savior, Jesus Christ. If you aren't sure today if you have been cleaned by accepting the Lord into your heart, please click here to learn more about the plan of salvation.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God (2 Cor. 1:2-4).

So I pulled Barbie out of the tub and dried her off. I watched Keely and realized something. Keely was totally about building relationships. She did this by finding common ground. You see, when I was little and played with my own Barbies, I loved to create the environment first. I wanted all the buildings built, the town developed, the furniture in place, etc.



Then the people could talk. I wanted structure first before the relationship, so that I could guarantee there would be a relationship. Keely taught me if you just love people where they are, all the rest will come together—just like Jesus.

Ever since the day "Barbie got saved," I made some changes. Relationships are what it's about, even if all the structure isn't in place yet. Thank you, Jesus, for showing me the example of what you want us all to be.

Applications:

What are some ways you can reach out to others?

What are some ways to be compassionate?

How do you deal with difficult people?

How do you deal with people who constantly seem to have problems or hold a hand out?

What are you doing to do next?

Kris Swiatocho is the President and Director of TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries and FromHisHands.com Ministries. Kris has served in ministry in various capacities for the last 20 years. An accomplished trainer and mentor, Kris has a heart to reach and grow leaders so they will in turn reach and grow others. She is currently working on her third Bible study, *From the Manger to the Cross: The Men in Jesus' Life*. Her second Bible study, *From the Manger to the Cross: The Women in Jesus' Life*, was published last fall and is available on her websites. Her first book, *Singles and Relationships: A 31-Day Experiment*, was co-authored with Dick Purnell of Single Life Resources.

TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries helps churches, pastors and single adult leaders evaluate, develop and support their single adult ministries through high-energy speaking engagements, results-oriented consulting and training and leadership development conferences and seminars. Click here to request a FREE "How to Start a Single Adult Ministry" guide.

FromHisHands.com Ministries is Kris's speaking ministry. If you've ever heard her speak, you know that Kris is the kind of speaker who keeps the crowd captivated, shares great information and motivates people to make a difference in the lives of those around them! She speaks to all church audiences on everything from "first impression" ministry to women's topics to singles and young adults. She can speak on a Sunday morning, at a woman's retreat or for a single adults conference. Bring Kris to your church today!

Singles and Relationships by Kris Swiatocho and Dick Purnell

Many singles are Christians who wonder if God will ever bring a mate their way or if they should just stop focusing on a future with a marriage partner and live the single life to the fullest. Kris Swiatocho and Dick Purnell offer solid biblical answers for singles in this newest title in Dick's popular 31-Day Experiment Bible study.