



## Episode 6-6: Relationships as and with Singles

### Resources:

#### Podcasts

[Singleness Transformed - Joyful Journey](#)

#### Books

[Seven Myths About Singleness - Sam Allberry](#)

[Singed Out for Him - Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth](#)

[Singleness Redefined - Carolyn Leutwiler](#)

#### Website

[Faith Bible Seminary](#)

### Transcript:

Jocelyn: I don't just need to feel better. I need the truth. And ultimately that will make me better.

Janet: I just want to make it as totally simple as possible for ladies to see that the Bible is really applicable to their everyday life.

Jocelyn: When they understand theology, the application flows out of it quickly with joy.

Janet: It is a journey, but even the journey itself is joyful when I'm doing it, holding the hand of my savior and trusting him all along the way. This is the joyful journey podcast, a podcast to inspire and equip women to passionately pursue beautiful biblical truth on their journey as women of God. When you choose truth, you're choosing joy.

Janet: Welcome back, Joyful Journey listeners. I am here today with my friend Noelle, once again.

Noelle: Hello everyone.

Janet: And today we're talking about a topic that touches so many people, probably all of us directly or indirectly. And that's singleness. Now, back in 2021, we did an episode called Singleness Transformed, but this one is really gonna be more about how do we cultivate meaningful relationships as single people or with single people.

Noelle: Yes, that's right. I am really excited about this conversation. So often when we think about relationships or the word relationships, the first thing that comes to mind is marriage.

Janet: Marriage, yes.



Noelle: Dating, you know, all of those things.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: I think I've mentioned before, I'm a high school teacher, so obviously the word to them relationships means it's synonymous with dating.

Noelle: But while those are good gifts from God. The Bible actually has a lot to say about singleness too.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: And it

Janet: and singles have a lot of relationships.

Noelle: Right. Yes. And it challenges some of the cultural messages that we hear every day.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: What the Bible says.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: And this is especially close to my heart. So full disclosure, I've spent my lifetime so far as a single.

Janet: Yep.

Noelle: And I'm 35, so for some people that's a long time being single. And I realize we probably have listeners that that's just, you know, very young still. But regardless, I am definitely not an expert by any stretch of the imagination. I have had to dive deeper. Well, I shouldn't say I've had to. I've chosen to dive deeper into this, and as I have done that, I've also felt burdened to share what I've learned with others. And so I'm hopeful that we can do that today.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: As we talk together. And just to be authentic with you, Janet, and with the listeners as well, I do struggle with some of these things that we're gonna cover today. So just because I wanna share doesn't mean that it's not hard for me or that I have it all together. I've spent some time prepping for this episode and during that I've also spent plenty of time questioning whether or not I'm the right person to talk about it, because of how deeply I've struggled with this during different seasons of my life. But,



Janet: well, I think that actually is, I'm so thankful you were honest in sharing that. What is it that we talk about that we wouldn't say that about?

Noelle: Sure.

Janet: You know, and I think because the point is not when I grow up, I wanna be Noelle. It's Noelle's telling me about an amazing God.

Noelle: Absolutely.

Janet: And the God that is helping you with the joys and struggles of your season is the same God that gives hope whatever our season. So I think you're just the one to talk to us about it.

Noelle: Well, thank you. And like you said, we know that God is who he is.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: So he is sovereign. And so even in the midst of this podcast prep, even in the midst of maybe struggling with this, I've been forced to wrestle with what I believe.

Janet: Yeah. Yeah.

Noelle: So. It's good to think about. So, alright. Enough about me.

Noelle: So first, let's talk, what does our culture say about singleness? Let's start by naming the reality. Our culture, I think, often sees singleness as a problem to be solved.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: Think about it. Movies, TV shows, commercials.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: You know, they often portray the single character as incomplete until they find the one

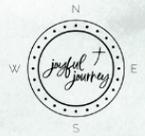
Janet: that is totally true, and it's one of the reasons I can't stand to read stories. Even if they're supposed to be mysteries, there's always the romance.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: That it's not real unless it ends with they get together.

Janet: Right.

Janet: And I think, and I'm married, but that's not the point.



Noelle: That's not the end goal.

Janet: No. And I get so frustrated by that and having worked with the singles for many years in the college ministry, have very strong opinions about that. So I completely agree with you. I was reading Sam Albury's book, seven Myths About Singleness. And he talked about the same thing, that that's always the climax,

Noelle: right.

Janet: Of the movie is the marriage, which implies happily ever after. There's a reason they don't talk about the next five years.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: Because it didn't do whatever it was supposed to do. It's not the thing.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And he also talked about talking with someone he hadn't seen in a long time, and they were talking about their children. And I was trying to find the quote in the book and I couldn't find it earlier, but it was a fascinating interchange that he was just saying, what's going on in his life? And the other person was saying, yes, here's where my, what are your kids up to? And the last one got married. Now they're all sorted. And I was like, did they realize they were talking to a man who's not, you know.

Noelle: Know your audience.

Janet: Okay, but what was the thinking? Oh, good.

Noelle: Yes.

Janet: Now they're gonna be okay. And I don't know, we do enough counseling to know that's just not even reality.

Noelle: No.

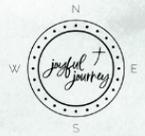
Janet: That it's okay after that. But it is. It is the goal.

Noelle: Right. Exactly. So the message is you're only whole if you're paired off with someone.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: Right?

Janet: Yes.



Noelle: And that honestly, that creates a lot of pressure.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: And I would say, especially for Christians, because they will often add another layer like, Hey, you're only going to be fully mature in Christ once you're married.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: Which obviously, I don't think anyone would actually say that to me, but it's kind of implied. Right? I've heard so many different things, but Oh, don't worry. You'll find someone someday. Or I just had to be content and then I found my husband, or

Janet: I know I need to not want one and then I got one.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Because that's how God is.

Noelle: Yeah. As if singleness is just a waiting room for real life. Right?

Janet: Yep.

Noelle: And unfortunately, I think this sentiment might actually be a little bit more common in the church than it is outside of the church, and that's kind of hurtful.

Janet: Well, and I think that's true. And I think Okay. Why would that be, in part because we have such a high view of marriage and should.

Noelle: Yeah. As we should.

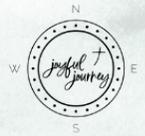
Janet: Yeah. So that's true. And we don't hook up. Like if you're in the world. You don't need to be paired with someone, but you can be doing all the things. So it's like they're not looking to pair off.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: They're just, and so it's like in, in the church, it's almost like our goal is to pair off. Yeah. Instead of our goal. Is to image Christ like Paul and Jesus who didn't pair off.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: You know? But Yeah.



Noelle: Yeah. And I would argue Janet, that that mindset can unintentionally make single people feel like they're less than.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: Or that their life is on hold. But I also want people to know the Bible actually gives us a much richer, a more dignified view of singleness. And when we look at scripture, we actually see that singleness is not a curse and it's not second class. And I've mentioned before, I'm a high school teacher. I love to share about singleness with my students, and I teach about singleness with them. I teach at a Christian school, so I have the privilege of doing that, and they, I would say 95% of the time don't even know that singleness is mentioned in the Bible. And so I would love Janet, if you could read from 1 Corinthians 7.

Noelle: I'm hopeful that this passage is not new to everyone, but if it is, let's talk about it. 1 Corinthians 7, what does Paul say?

Janet: So Paul is saying when he is talking about marriage, he says, I say this as a concession, not as a demand. When he talks about getting married, it's a concession.

Janet: In general, I wish that all people were as I am, and he's single.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: But each has his own gift from God. One person has this gift, another has that.

Noelle: Right. And that whole chapter is really fascinating. I would encourage all of our listeners to read through that and

Janet: Yeah.

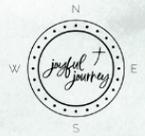
Noelle: And look at other passages, certainly as well. But Paul says there that both marriage and singleness are gifts.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: And each comes with unique opportunities and challenges and Paul kind of goes through some of those in that chapter. Marriage allows a picture of Christ in the church. Right? We were talking about before.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: It should be upheld appropriately so. But also singleness allows you to give undivided devotion to the Lord.



Janet: Yes.

Noelle: But it strikes me that Paul wasn't just speaking theory, you know. He lived it.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: As far as we know, Paul himself was single and through his singleness, what he did was he had the flexibility to travel.

Janet: Yep.

Noelle: He planted churches and he disciplined people across the Mediterranean world, which is really pretty amazing.

Janet: Yeah. I don't think anybody wants to say Paul wasn't very mature because he hadn't gotten married yet.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: You know, it's amazing how we bring that in. Yeah. Alberry says, here's a quote from his book, I thought was really good. The temptation for many who are single is to compare the downs of singleness with the ups of marriage. And I think, that's what we do with whatever we don't have. Right?

Noelle: Oh, right. Yeah.

Janet: And so we do it there too. You are showing one of the ups of singleness in what Paul did, the flexibility to serve in many different ways. And Noelle, I've seen you do that, traveling to other places and serving in ministering, in ways that you might not be able to do as easily

Noelle: Sure.

Janet: If you weren't single.

Noelle: Right. Exactly. And, Paul wasn't alone in that either. Think of some of the Bible's most influential people who were single. Let's give the number one Sunday school Answer.

Janet: Jesus.

Noelle: Jesus. I mean, just pause for a second. Jesus, the most complete, fully human person who ever lived. And he never married.

Janet: I mean, that is, when you think about that and how that just flies in the face of, you're not complete until,



Noelle: right.

Janet: Anybody wanna tell Jesus, yeah, but you don't really get it.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: 'Cause you didn't get it. It's like. He was complete.

Noelle: Yes.

Janet: More so than I'll ever be. Until I'm with him.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: Few others that stand out to me. When I think about single people in the Bible, at least as far as we know, Mary and Martha, they were single women who hosted Jesus and served his disciples. Joseph for a large part of his life, from what we know, he was serving as a single person.

Janet: Yep.

Noelle: And he cultivated relationships in really difficult circumstances.

Janet: Yes, he did. Yeah. So when we say singleness is a gift, and let me be clear about what we mean by a gift. I don't believe singleness is a spiritual gift that if you're given it, it means you can know you'll never marry.

Noelle: Yeah. No, no, that's not what,

Janet: because when you're 12, if you only have the gift of marriage, but you're not married yet, I don't even know how that works.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: So whatever season of life you are in today is a gift.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: So for today, that's the gift. And when we say that singleness is a gift, then we have all of these living, breathing, scriptural examples of people who lived faithful, fruitful, impactful, meaningful lives without being married.



Noelle: Right. And to further what you were saying about being a gift, it could change during your life too.

Janet: Absolutely.

Noelle: So I'm 35 and single. I might be single the rest of my life or I might not be.

Janet: Right.

Noelle: You are married, currently.

Janet: 60 and married. You're allowed to say it, but thank you. Yes.

Noelle: 60 and married.

Janet: And one day I may be single.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: So you have the gift of marriage right now.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: I have the gift of singleness right now. And that could flip flop for us.

Janet: That's exactly in 10 years. It may be the opposite.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: Sorry Brent. I don't mean anything by that, but you know,

Noelle: but like you said, it reminds us that fruitfulness is not dependent on marital status, right?

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: And honestly, if, we all really thought about us, both singleness and marriage can hold the same descriptions. And this is something that I try to teach my students when I've talked about it with them. A phrase that I try to emphasize is, singleness is blank. Marriage is blank. And often you can fill in those blanks with the same word.

Janet: Interesting. So singleness is hard. Marriage is hard.

Noelle: Right. Both can,



Janet: okay. Okay.

Noelle: Both can be really challenging and both can be really good.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: Right?

Janet: Yes. Singleness is good and marriage is good, right?

Noelle: Singleness is a gift. Marriage is a gift.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: Singleness can be lonely. Marriage can be lonely.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: Right?

Janet: Yes, for sure.

Noelle: So I just think both require a lot of the same things and both can have the same struggles. You cannot think that one or the other is going to change your circumstances necessarily. Right?

Janet: Right.

Noelle: If you're lonely as a single person, you will probably be lonely as a married person.

Janet: And I am a testimony to that. Because when I was single, I remember thinking, if the Lord gives me a husband, this ache will be gone. And then he did. And I went through one of the loneliest times of my entire life.

Noelle: Yeah.

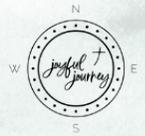
Janet: And part of what made it lonelier was knowing I'm in the closest relationship, I'm gonna have this side of heaven and I'm lonely.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: Like what in the world? So when I go into it thinking it's gonna do this. It didn't.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: Yeah.



Noelle: And the flip side of that is also true if you are content or,

Janet: or growing in, nobody's completely right, but

Noelle: Sure. Yeah, yeah, absolutely. That can be true within singleness and marriage as well.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: Or if you see them each as a gift. Right. I mean, I think it's healthy to have the perspective that singleness is blank, marriage is blank, can be filled with the same word.

Janet: That's so fascinating. Now I'm gonna try to come up with a word where it doesn't work, but it probably does. So I'm like, that's really good. That's good. Which means obviously it's not, which one is better? If you can fill 'em in with the same word, then we're not talking about which one is better.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: But about how whichever one you're in. God is using that to shape you.

Noelle: Right. So that gets kind of to the heart of our conversation today. Let's think about how God uses both to shape us.

Noelle: So specifically within this topic, if you're single, how do you cultivate relationships within the church? And then later on we'll talk about if you're not single, how to cultivate relationships with singles.

Janet: Yeah.

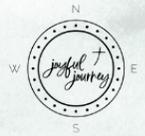
Noelle: So the temptation might be as a single to withdraw or to only wait for marriage to start. But I believe that scripture shows us another way.

Janet: Well, and that goes back to those Bible characters that you've already mentioned. So, how did they cultivate relationships when all of the ones that you mentioned were single?

Noelle: Right? And we could talk for probably six hours about this. But let's talk briefly about it. So let's start with Jesus. With Jesus we see intentionality. Right?

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: He had his 12 disciples, but then he also had the three, Peter, James, and John, and he invested intentionally and deeply in those friendships.



Janet: Yeah, I like that. You know, I've heard that used as a, like, you need to have your three and you need to have your 12, and I don't believe the point was those numbers.

Noelle: Oh no.

Janet: You know, obviously for us, but the idea that even Jesus, because as a man, he had limits. He was not as close to every person on the planet.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: He still had to intentionally invest in a smaller number and then an even smaller number. But when I think about Jesus' relationships, one of the things that just really strikes me is, they never completely understood him.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: So he did invest in them. They did have joy, but they weren't always there for them. He did experience loneliness. It wouldn't, not because he wasn't married, but because they didn't understand him, and his intentionality enriched his life. But his focus was on their benefit, even in his relationships.

Janet: I think sometimes we can look to our relationships for what they're gonna do for us.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: And then it's usually never enough.

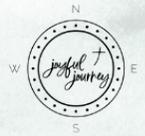
Noelle: Right.

Janet: Married or single, it's just not enough. But I look at how Jesus handled that invested fully, was enriched by it, laughed, was wise in how he invested. But his focus was on their benefit even when they didn't understand him.

Noelle: Yeah, absolutely. There's in multiples of gospels, Jesus choosing the 12 apostles, the 12 disciples. And in Mark three it talks about it. Starting in verse 13, it says, after Jesus went up on the mountain, called out the ones that he wanted to go with him, and they came to him, and then he appointed 12 of them and called them his apostles, they were to accompany him. And then it goes on and talks about the different things that they did, but I just love that. Like, hey, even Jesus. He called people to himself.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: And he was super intentional about it. So I just love that intentionality.



Janet: So he was very intentional. That's a great word for his relationships.

Noelle: Yes.

Noelle: Okay, let's move on to Paul. One of the things that I love about Paul is that he was super bold and he was not afraid to use relational language, which I love. So, all throughout scripture we see, he called people my beloved or my fellow worker, my child in the faith.

Janet: I love that.

Noelle: Yeah. And then he also wasn't afraid to move around and minister and teach and serve throughout his adult life. And so that boldness with language, but also the boldness with the way that he used his life.

Janet: Yes. And you see that in his letters too. You know, you think about Paul, you think, wow, like he said it like it was, but you're right. He used a lot of affectionate relational language. And that went with his boldness.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: You know, which I think, what a beautiful example that is. It's not like, well, sorry, I just say it like it is and I don't show that I care. Paul did both.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: Yeah. And did it well.

Noelle: And do we know if he was an introvert or an extrovert, Janet? I don't think we do.

Janet: Funny. I bet he didn't take the test.

Noelle: I just think sometimes I've talked about boldness with people and they're like, well, Noelle, that's easy for you. You're an extrovert, but just a little. You know,

Janet: Oh, funny. Yeah. Let's use biblical terms.

Noelle: Yeah. Alright, so we have intentionality with Jesus. We have boldness in Paul, let's think about Mary and Martha a little bit. So I would say specifically with Mary, especially, we see hospitality, but Mary and Martha, they opened their home. They created space for meaningful connection.

Janet: Yes.



Noelle: We could take a long time to talk about their differences, especially in that one passage that talks about their

Janet: poor Martha. Had a bad moment and we're all talking about it forever.

Noelle: She was probably wonderful 98% of the time. So we could talk about that. But I think the takeaway here is that they had previously decided to create that space.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: I don't think that just happened.

Janet: That's right.

Noelle: You know? Did they do it perfectly?

Janet: Of course not.

Noelle: No, of course not. But it also doesn't appear here that they were just sitting around moping, waiting for the next thing to happen.

Janet: Yeah. I love that. I love that.

Noelle: Okay. So cultivating relationships as a single person today can mean practicing those same things. So we talked about three things, intentionality, boldness, and hospitality. So practically speaking, what does that look like?

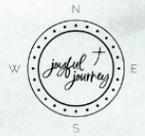
Noelle: So I would argue for single people, it means leaning into opportunities that singleness provides. Which, the book you mentioned talks about that a lot. So we can definitely link that in the show notes, but okay. So leaning into those opportunities, one of them is flexibility in service. So you mentioned this before, Janet, you might be able to say yes as a single person, you might be able to say yes to serving in ways that a married person can't. Especially a married person with kids.

Janet: Yes. Yeah.

Noelle: Right. Or a person with kids. So no, that does not mean that I need to fill my schedule with only service opportunities.

Janet: And you can't say no to anything.

Noelle: Yeah. But I do recognize that I can step into the church, big C, I can step into the church in different ways because I am not tied down in the same way.



Janet: Yeah. And, I think that's to recognize that that is an opportunity and a gift. Instead of being offended. Why do they always ask me? Just because I'm single, they assume I'm available. Well, actually it's a compliment that they assumed you'd want to if you could.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: So they thought that of you and they thought in her season she might be able to, and what a compliment. That doesn't mean you have to.

Noelle: No.

Janet: If you're a people pleaser, that will be miserable.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: If you're not, and you're willing to just serve where you can, what a compliment that people think of you

Noelle: Right.

Janet: To do those things that require additional flexibility because they know your heart.

Noelle: Right. Just like marriage should point people to Christ. Right?

Janet: Yep.

Noelle: Singleness should also point people to Christ.

Janet: Absolutely.

Noelle: And it might look a little different. Right?

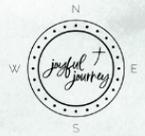
Janet: Yep. But the goal ultimately at that level is the same.

Noelle: Right. The way that I serve should point people to Jesus.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: Okay. Another point for cultivating relationships as a single is to be bold, like we talked about. And so this is a hard one for some people, but I think that you have to invite people in. Yeah. And you have to initiate friendships and pursue deep conversations and I don't have to wait for others to invite me.

Janet: Yeah.



Noelle: In fact, it's kind of a little bit of a joke with several friends that they just know that I personally, I invite myself over when I'm needing that community, but seriously, like, it's okay to be vulnerable like that. It's, it's sometimes a good thing to be bold and to initiate.

Janet: It's so interesting that you have those words all together, bold, initiate, and vulnerable, because we think either be bold. Or be vulnerable.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: But you're right to be bold and initiate is vulnerability. And I appreciate you acknowledging for some people that vulnerability is really hard.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: What happens when you invite yourself over and they say, I'm sorry, tonight's not a good night.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: Because, not 'cause they hate you, but because literally it's not a good night. They're not home or whatever. That feels very vulnerable.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: But when I am living in the gospel, then I am able to risk like that.

Noelle: Right. Absolutely. And I would say the opposite of that, the opposite of being bold and. Vulnerable is pretty dangerous because the opposite, I think, is wallowing in your self-pity. So if I'm just,

Janet: wow. Well, that's unattractive.

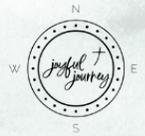
Noelle: If I'm just sitting somewhere wishing that I wasn't alone or wishing that someone had invited me over or whatever, that's, oh my goodness, that's so wrong.

Janet: Right.

Noelle: And if I'm being honest, I do struggle with that, Janet. I really do. But think about it, how could sitting somewhere wishing that I wasn't alone possibly be helpful for my soul?

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: So I need to be really careful with that.



Janet: But it is so tempting because if someone, if I try-- and that's all I can do. I can't make people be available. And God doesn't say, you better make them. But I can say, okay, Lord, I am struggling. And so what I'm gonna do is I'm gonna choose to invest.

Noelle: Yeah,

Janet: I am taking a risk.

Noelle: Yes, you are.

Janet: And what if you don't know anyone where you're that comfortable to take that risk?

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And what does that maybe help you see about where you are?

Noelle: Right. Community is important.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: Yeah. It's vulnerable for sure. And honestly, it does hurt when people say, no. Believe me, I've been on the receiving end of that. But it's easy to wallow in self-pity and just avoid the risk instead.

Janet: Yeah. Yeah.

Noelle: But easier doesn't mean that it's right or that it's better.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: So I was reading a book recently. It was actually a fiction book that a friend recommended to me. And in the book it said, anytime that love, meaning Christian Love, you know, relationships, is involved, it is a risk.

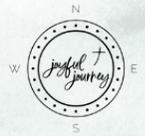
Janet: Yes.

Noelle: You know, so it's not just about singleness either, you know?

Janet: That's right. This is one way you apply it,

Noelle: right

Janet: as a single person. But it's absolutely true. Yeah..



Noelle: Okay. Let's kind of switch gears here and talk about another thing, and that is, what can married friends do that's either harmful or helpful?

Janet: Yes, we have to talk about that because sometimes people really mean well, but in the end, it can be maybe more hurtful than helpful.

Noelle: Yeah. So, some harmful things. And if you're listening to this and you've done these things, please don't think we're trying to call you out on it. It's just helpful to learn and grow and then hopefully continue down the path of growth. Okay.

Janet: Well, because all of us have not always known what to do.

Noelle: Exactly.

Janet: And have not done it well. And because I believe in the providence and sovereignty of God, even my lame attempts that were not helpful are used by God.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: So I don't have to live in regret, but I would like to get better.

Noelle: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Okay. So one harmful thing could include not including single friends and gatherings. Especially if they just assume they wanna be the babysitter.

Janet: Oh.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Yeah. That is so true. 'cause I think it's, well, who do I know that wouldn't be coming to this event? I think of a single person. For whatever reason. And I think sometimes the fear is, well, it's gonna be mostly couples and I don't want them to feel left out.

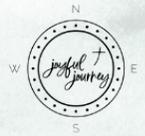
Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: So, you know, as a married person, so does that mean that if I'm gonna have mostly couples over, do I need to make sure there's more singles? So now do I need, if I'm gonna invite a single person, do I need to invite at least three single person or just invite one or just invite two and then they'll think they're being set up?

Janet: Or is it better to just treat them as a person?

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Invite them and know that they can make that decision themselves.



Noelle: Right.

Janet: Like, I'm not gonna surprise them with thinking it's just me and them. You know, if it's couples. I don't know. Maybe I give them the freedom to say, do you wanna bring somebody? You're welcome to. We're not sitting around as couples.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: But there are a lot of couples coming.

Noelle: Sure.

Janet: And if you wanna bring somebody with you, feel free. I don't know.

Noelle: Yeah, and I think obviously every situation is different, but some of the things that you were talking about, I just kept thinking, okay, overthinking there, you know, oh, if there's one single person, do I need, how many? We do not have the perfect solution for how many singles to,

Janet: makes it okay.

Noelle: So I wanna thank you for saying. Treat them as a person. That's kind of the point, right?

Janet: Yeah. Yeah.

Noelle: You might be offended if I said, Hey Janet, I'm not gonna invite you to this thing on Saturday because you're married.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: Or you know what literally does happen? 'cause you're a pastor's wife.

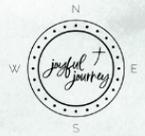
Noelle: Oh yeah.

Janet: So instead of you're just a person, you're a pastor's wife. I didn't think you'd want to do that.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: It's like, oh, I didn't know there was a pastor's wife list of what they want, but okay.

Noelle: Right. Treat.



Janet: So I get that when you categorize people.

Noelle: Right. Treat people as people. So I think sometimes we get so caught up in categorizing people. And maybe even, especially within the church.

Janet: Totally.

Noelle: That I think that we forget that we're all just people.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: You know? But as you mentioned, you can for sure go out of your way to make people feel welcome. So for example, I was really blessed one time when I had a friend who was throwing a Christmas party and she had made it clear that it was a family event. Like it was a family Christmas party. Everyone was bringing their families, and she just found me and she said, Hey, by the way, you can totally bring a date or a friend if you want. You know, and it wasn't a huge, big thing. It wasn't that everyone there was gonna be a couple, but she just wanted me to know, hey, people are coming with her families. If you wanna bring a date, if you wanna grab a friend, you know, do that. So I didn't have to show up alone if I didn't want to.

Janet: Right. And if you didn't care, then you didn't.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: All right. Another harmful thing that people could do would be, oh man, I am the victim of this one. People always trying to fix their singleness as if it's a problem.

Noelle: Okay. So I've had people say some really strange things to me, honestly. One of my favorites was, so are you in college or are you married?

Janet: I didn't know those were the two categories.

Noelle: Option C. Or I just recently had someone ask me, so why are you still single, anyway?

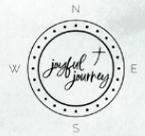
Janet: I got married at 28, which was enough that I got some of those.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And it would be like, are you just too picky?

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: I was like, thank you.



Noelle: I think your standards are too high, Noelle. Oh.

Janet: Do you even know anything about me or what I, okay.

Noelle: Yeah. So there's just a lot of different questions that I-- Please think through your questions before you ask them. Our singleness, is not a problem, and that doesn't mean we don't wanna talk about it. I'm not saying you can't bring it up, but like, it's not an issue to be fixed.

Janet: Right.

Noelle: You know, if I went to you, Janet, and I was like, Janet, so why are you married? That might just seem kind of weird, right? So why would someone ask me, you know, why, why am I single anyway?

Janet: And if you're single, just know, they don't know what they're saying. They maybe enjoy being married and they want you to have that.

Noelle: Sure.

Janet: Because they like it, believe the best and come up with a stock answer.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: So you're prepared for those things.

Noelle: Yeah. I have four brothers and I've had my brothers say, you can just answer, well, I have four brothers. Like, they won't let anyone get near me. Anyway, so that's my funny response. But within that same category, I've also had people that aren't close to me. So I'm not talking about close friends, but

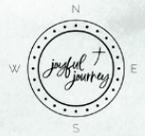
Janet: Right.

Noelle: People that are not close to me only be quote unquote interested in my life when they think I might be dating. Or when they have someone that they want me to date. So of course I am not saying that it's wrong to talk about someone's relationship status.

Janet: Right.

Noelle: But what I am saying is my relationship status is not the most important part of me.

Janet: That's right.



Noelle: And if someone isn't close enough to me to pour into me in other ways, then I am probably not helped by them trying to only get information or get the tea as my high school students say.

Janet: Get the tea

Noelle: Yeah. About my relationship status. Does that make sense?

Janet: Yes. And yet they think they're being helpful. You know what a good reminder. Again, look at each person as an image bearer. We did the episodes at the very beginning that I actually use in counseling, and go back to a lot what is our purpose in life? And none of it was about our relationship status.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: If I look at each person as an image bearer with the purpose of reflecting God's values and his character. Then I get to know someone, then I have a better idea of their giftings and how God's using them rather than just seeing them as a category.

Noelle: Right, exactly. Okay, so now on the flip side, we talked about a couple harmful things. What's helpful? 'Cause I will say for every harmful thing I've had, just as many kind and loving things that my community has done so well, and so I want others to be encouraged. And please remember, this is just my personal experience.

Noelle: I'm one person. And while I do probably represent a lot of single people here, I'm sure that there are others in your lives that are different from me. And so when I talk about things that are helpful, please, please, please just simply have a conversation with your friends before you start trying all these things.

Janet: See if it's helpful for them.

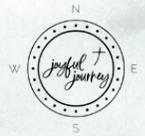
Noelle: Right? Yeah.

Janet: Ask them. Yeah.

Noelle: Absolutely. So you can start with the things I list here and ask them, would this be an encouragement to you? It's not wrong to have an awkward conversation and say, Hey, I was listening to a podcast and she said this was helpful for her. Would that be helpful for you? You know, but just express to them your desire to love them well.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: Okay. So a couple of things that people have done for me. I'll share some ways that some of my non-single friends have loved me really well. One of them is including me in their family



rhythms. So that means inviting me over for dinner. Invited me for outings. Including me in holidays. I have been included in Easter egg hunts.

Janet: Oh. I want to.

Noelle: I have been given matching Christmas pajamas.

Janet: Oh, funny.

Noelle: Yeah. With their family. I've been invited over during homework time, you know, during simple daily rhythms. I've also been included in family trips.

Noelle: I have been able to celebrate my birthday with other family traditions, so I'm not talking about my personal family traditions, but my friends. Yeah.

Janet: Theirs. Wow.

Noelle: I've been invited to school concerts, to school plays, you know, it's really incredible how feeling included in just the normal things. I mean, some of those things were big things. Right. Trips and stuff like that, but some of those are just very normal.

Janet: Yes. And it's so interesting and because again, ask your friend would they feel like why would they want me to come watch their kids during a homework time? But for as you say it and you describe it, it's like, it just makes me wanna smile. It feels very inclusive.

Noelle: Yes.

Janet: Very welcoming.

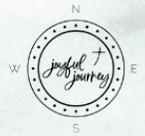
Noelle: Right.

Janet: And I don't know that we think about that. For us, it's like, I think that would be boring. Why would I invite her to that? Because I like her. Why would I want her to have to just sit for a normal family dinner. We should do something big. But to realize, I need to ask her. Maybe she would like to do some of these other things.

Noelle: Yeah. Just do life together.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: You know, when we were talking about one of the things that singles should do, we talked about boldness. Like Paul was bold, but I also want to say here that probably it is true. Sam Alberry talked about this in the last chapter of his book that it is possible that your single friends need you more than you need them. In a daily rhythm. Right? Because. Let's just talk



about us personally, Janet. So like you on a daily basis, not every day, but on a daily basis, you have someone to eat dinner with, right?

Janet: Right.

Noelle: You know?

Janet: That's right. I don't go through an entire day and just be alone.

Noelle: Right. And so it's just simple things like that. So that's why I mentioned say, Hey, the kids are doing homework, we're having tuna casserole. You know,

Janet: you're welcome to come.

Noelle: Yeah. And so with that boldness, although I absolutely encourage singles to be bold and to invite yourself over and to initiate, I also think it's really important for married people to know, sometimes it's exhausting to always be the person initiating, you know? One of the things that Sam Alberry talks about in his book is that because singles probably need it more, sometimes you can almost imply, Hey, as a married person, I don't need you. You can imply that if you are not the one doing the inviting. So for example, Janet, if I would say to you, oh, Janet, I really wanna hang out. When can we hang out? That's great. But if I'm the only person,

Janet: right.

Noelle: Ever inviting myself over to your house,

Janet: I'm letting you know I don't really need you.

Noelle: Right?

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: Which is kind of hard.

Janet: You're not as valuable to me. Yes.

Noelle: Right. And so that.

Janet: That is hard.

Noelle: Yeah. He has a lot of good points on that. But anyway, so including in family rhythms is one. So here's another really helpful thing closely related, and that's being intentional about having meaningful conversations and not just surface level conversations.

Noelle: So, Single people just don't have an automatic sounding board and a spouse.



Janet: Yes.

Noelle: So I really need people to be willing to invest on me on a deep level.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: You know, both for accountability and for the community that the Bible talks about. It's how Jesus lived.

Janet: Yeah. Yeah. And then you're right that it's so important. We all need this. And many with spouses don't have that type of relationship either.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Sadly. Some do. But not all. So it's just such a reminder to be intentional in finding ways to develop this.

Noelle: Yes.

Janet: And I realize you can't make that happen.

Noelle: No.

Janet: But if I am not intentionally seeking it, I'm not saying it's a value.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: So I should at least be pursuing it. 'cause it's not just gonna come.

Noelle: No.

Janet: And how am I gonna develop those?

Noelle: Right. And it's not a program. There's not

Janet: Right, right.

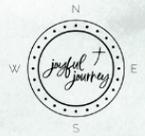
Noelle: You know.

Janet: But I have to give opportunity for it.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: So number one, I have to get below the surface.

Noelle: Right.



Janet: Like even if you and I are having lunch, we could keep it really surfacey. Or I could say, can I tell you a little bit about what God's doing in my life? And I'd love to hear what he's doing in yours. Like, somebody's gotta be willing to go deeper.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: And then if you do it and the other person's totally weirded out and never calls you again, that one's probably not going anywhere. But you know. But somebody has to be brave enough to go below the surface, and I have to put myself in environments where I can do that. Is that a small group Bible study? Is that, you know, asking people? I just recently this year I reached out to three women who I didn't even know if they knew each other, but I'm like, I have time during the day at this time, would some people talk about the forgiveness sermons with me?

Noelle: Hmm. Cool.

Janet: Like. How do I begin to develop those two?

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: So married or single, we need to be doing it, but for many, at least married people have someone

Noelle: right

Janet: that they're talking to. And it's good to remember if you're not married, you need someone having those conversations.

Noelle: Right. And like you said, it doesn't have to necessarily be structured. In fact, I would say it probably shouldn't be structured. It's just about being a good friend.

Janet: Yeah. Yeah.

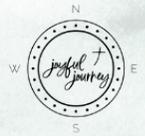
Noelle: You know, a lot of what we're talking about in this episode is being the people that God created us to be.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: And seeing others as He sees others, you know? It's doing life together.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: It's bearing one another's burdens. It's rejoicing together. It's grieving together. And honestly, Janet, it does not have to be different just because someone is single.



Janet: I think that's so good to say because I think many times when we're married, we feel like it is supposed to be different.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: You know, it's like what in the world? I don't know why.

Noelle: Yeah. Most of my closest friends are married. It's helpful to be aware that if someone is single, they might not naturally have that built-in community and one another's. And like you said, some married people don't have that.

Janet: Right.

Noelle: So I think my point is that the relationship status should not matter. Let's just love each other well.

Janet: Right.

Noelle: You know?

Janet: Right.

Noelle: So anyway, I'm sure there's a lot of other helpful things that we could spend time talking about, but I don't want to talk for too long here. So I do want to talk about one that's specific probably to me, but a lot of other people as well. It's pretty simple.

Noelle: And that's a hug. You know, physical affection in healthy, and appropriate ways really matters. And Janet, I have gone days without anyone giving me a hug, you know. And for me, that's really hard.

Janet: And again. Get to know your friend.

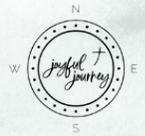
Noelle: Right.

Janet: Because your friend might be going, why are you hugging me all the time all of a sudden? Don't be touching me, but, and good to think about when you're married again, some of them have gone

Noelle: Yes.

Janet: But there is a relationship that is intended that that wouldn't happen.

Noelle: Right.



Janet: Even though we don't all live in that ideal. But when you're single to realize how long you could go without physical affection, and that's not something we're all very sensitive to

Noelle: Right.

Janet: And should be.

Noelle: And the lack of physical affection, or just simple human contact, honestly, it doesn't even have to be a hug. Sometimes it's just simple human contact. That lack can be really difficult.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: I actually just had a friend yesterday, or the day before who had to stop by school where I teach for a meeting, and she texted me and said, Hey, if you're in between classes, do you wanna hug? And I can't tell you just how much her thoughtfulness totally changed my morning, you know?

Janet: Oh, that is so awesome.

Noelle: Yeah, and it was simple, you know, and of, of course, she's my close friend and she knows me. She knows that that's something,

Janet: and she cares about you.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: It's not just a, I'm gonna do this for you because you're single.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: Because I know my friend.

Noelle: Right.

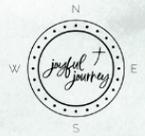
Janet: I know she enjoys that and I love her. So I love That's so great.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: I don't know that I would've thought about that. Because I'm personally not a particularly huggy person.

Noelle: Sure.

Janet: But I also have a husband and kids who I can get hugs from, so I also don't have to think about it as much and going out of my way to at least offer hugs.



Noelle: Sure

Janet: To my single sisters. What a great idea.

Noelle: Right. And like we talked about at the beginning, it's okay to have an awkward conversation and say, Hey, I listened to this podcast.

Janet: Yeah, yeah.

Noelle: And this is something they said and someone I know. I actually, I have other single friends that would be mortified if people just started coming up and hugging them. But if someone asked me, I wouldn't be offended. Like, Hey, like, do you, do you wanna hug?

Janet: Well, what's that like for you?

Noelle: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So. Anyway. I would say kind of in summary, cultivating relationships is a part of how we live.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: Fully whatever season that God has us in, if we want to live fully, cultivating relationships is a part of it.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: So I know personally I have a lot of work to do in that.

Janet: Me too.

Noelle: And also. Yeah. People that aren't singles have a lot of work to do.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: But by the grace of God, Janet, we can live in community.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: And it might be a little messy and it might involve some awkward conversations, but it can be really beautiful too. There's a phrase that my best friend and I like to use messy, beautiful friendship.

Janet: Yeah. And I love that. And we can do that because of Jesus.

Noelle: absolutely



Janet: I mean that should be what binds us together, not our relationship status. I love that.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: I like to end the episodes with talking about some resources. Are there any that you would recommend that people could think more deeply about some of this?

Noelle: Sure. So I would say we've mentioned several times the book by Sam Alberry, and it's titled Seven Myths of Singleness.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: Full disclosure. I've only read half of it.

Janet: I've read all of it. Highly recommend. Yes.

Noelle: Good. So, it's really helpful in what he has to say. And it is written by a single man and I think he's,

Janet: he's pastoring.

Noelle: And he's maybe. Forties or fifties. Right?

Janet: I'm going to, I believe so, yes.

Noelle: So I just think that's helpful for listeners to know.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: Sometimes when someone tries to talk about something that they haven't experienced,

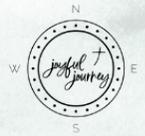
Janet: they're 22 and they write a book on singleness.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: You're like, hmmmmmm. Write it again later.

Noelle: So I am personally planning to finish that read. And I have very enjoyed what I've read so far. But then it's funny because I knew you were gonna ask about resources and I thought, man, I actually don't know a lot of resources on this topic.

Janet: Right.



Noelle: I'm not saying that there aren't any. But like we've talked about many times through this episode, I think that really being the person that God wants us to be or, you know, being the person that was created in the image of God that,

Janet: and seeing others that way.

Noelle: Right. And so reading books or listening to podcasts or, you know, listening to sermons, whatever it might be, it doesn't have to pertain to singleness or marriage, you know?

Janet: And I think as singles that it's important to remember that too. Not everything is, well, that doesn't apply to me because I'm single.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: It's like, no, it's the same.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: We're all the same in that way. Yeah. There are a couple other booklets that I have found helpful Singled Out for Him by Nancy DeMoss Wolgamuth. That's a very helpful little booklet. Another book that I read a few years, probably 10 years ago now. Singleness Redefined by Carolyn. I don't know how you say her last name. Leuteiler, maybe we'll have all that linked, just a couple of other ones. But I agree Albury's book was good and all of the resources about the one another's

Noelle: right

Janet: and how to live out my purpose, including seeing all the people around me,

Noelle: right.

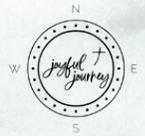
Janet: And loving them as other image bearers. It's really all the same.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: So good. This has been really helpful. Thank you, Noelle, for being willing to be vulnerable and talk about that. And I pray that it will be a blessing for our listeners as well.

Noelle: Yeah, absolutely. Well, I'm happy to talk about it and I hope that as people listen, regardless of the relationship status, they think, hey, that's one action step that I could take, that I could do to better live in community. Really.

Janet: Yes.



Noelle: 'Cause it's not about relationship status. It's about community, which is what God calls us to.

Janet: Excellent.

To keep from missing any future episodes, please sign up for our newsletter on our webpage [faithlafayette.org/JJP](http://faithlafayette.org/JJP) From there you can also subscribe to this podcast on Apple, Google, or Spotify. You can also visit us on our Facebook page or Instagram at Joyful Journey Podcast. If you have questions or comments for us, you can email us at [joyfuljourneyquestions@outlook.com](mailto:joyfuljourneyquestions@outlook.com). Joyful Journey Podcast is a ministry of Faith Bible Seminary. All proceeds go to offset costs of this podcast and toward scholarships for women to receive their [MABC through Faith Bible Seminary](#).

Host Janet and her husband, Brent, also speak at a variety of conferences as a way to raise money for the seminary. If you want to look at what they offer or book them for a conference, [go to their website](#).