

HOW'S THAT WORKING FOR YOU?

THE SEQUEL

May 6, 2007

A Frank Discussion About LDS "SINGLENES"

1. 33% of LDS Church adult members (US) are single
2. Being a single adult in the Church is NOT a negative state, but is difficult at times given the family focus
3. Single adult women outnumber men 1.9 to 1.0 in EG
4. Singles have more control over their environment & make fewer compromises than their married counterparts
5. Church Units need to increase their capability to deal with single adult members & their needs
6. Being a single adult member of the Church can be a matter of circumstance, a matter of choice, or both

LDS church singles wards

You can "*come unto Christ*" and participate in the programs of the Church in any ward

Singles Wards focus on the "unique" needs of single adult members

Singles wards with members over the age of 30 are VERY RARE...less than 10 in the entire church

Elliot Groves Ward Mission Statement

Provide a ward that fosters spiritual growth for temple worthy, single members of the Church, living in the Phoenix metropolitan area, ages 31 to 45, that:

- Advocates dating & marriage
- Fosters social interaction
- Sponsors family home evenings
- Promotes temple attendance & family history work
- Facilitates service
- Provides effective home & visiting teaching
- Supports & resources effective missionary work

HOWS THAT WORKING FOR US?

- EXCEPTIONAL at bringing people together and creating a plethora of social and church activities that allow you to meet, greet, worship, serve, teach, and have fun
- MARGINALLY EFFECTIVE at dating
- INNEFFECTIVE at moving single ward members into serious relationships and marriage

Elliot Groves Ward Member Behavior "A PROPOSED MODEL"

- Disclaimers
 - This is observational, not scientific
 - This applies to members of the Elliot Groves Ward or those LDS single adults with similar characteristics
 - Approximate age 28-50
 - Temple Worthy
 - If children, non-custodial parent or co-custodial parent

Elliot Groves Ward Member Behavior "A PROPOSED MODEL"

Your Status as a Single Adult church member can be divided into one of three categories, depending on your circumstances, feelings, attitudes, health, perceptions, choices, and actions

I call these categories, STAGES

No one has all the characteristics of a given stage, but EVERYONE is in one of the stages

STAGE ONE.....UNHAPPY

“I Am Really Unhappy”

Or.....

“I Hate Being Single”

- Characteristics:
 - Sad
 - Angry / Bitter
 - Requires a high level of assistance from others
 - Abnormal levels of stress & anxiety
 - May suffer physical or emotional health problems
 - May struggle, in a “spiritual sense” with testimony, activity, and obedience
 - Lack of stability and/or capability in professional/job situation
 - The trauma of divorce may put you in this stage
 - The demands of being a single parent may put you in this stage

STAGE TWO.....HAPPY

"I'm OK Being Single, I want to get married, & I'm doing something about it"

- Characteristics:

- Active in Ward Activities, Temple Attendance, & Service
- Has Realistic Expectations or is Naive regarding relationships
- Sense of urgency to get married is evident
- Actively dating, pursuing relationships, or finding ways to meet new people of common interest
- Breaks off relationships that aren't "moving forward" even though that can be painful
- Focused on maintaining or improving personal appearance and grooming

STAGE THREE.....Complacent

I Enjoy Being Single.....

"I've figured this out, I'm good at it, & chances are good I won't get married"

- Characteristics:
 - Older....young singles are not single long enough to get good at it
 - Active in Ward Activities, Temple Attendance, & Service
 - Secure professionally & active in professional development
 - Very close to family: mom/dad; brothers/sisters; nieces/nephews
 - Smart...they know that marriage can be hard and they are constantly looking for reasons for a relationship "NOT TO WORK"
 - Unrealistic relationship expectations "perfect match" or "no match"
 - Not willing to take the time, energy, or risk to pursue relationships or proactively meet new people of the opposite sex
 - Seldom date, and then often only by coercion
 - May demonstrate a lack of concern for appearance, weight, and grooming
 - Content to stay in a relationship that isn't moving forward
 - Fear....past relationship experience or limited relationship experience make doing nothing seem like a preferred option

Implications of the Stages

The "STAGE" you are in is VERY important in relationship development because it can be ENTIRELY determinate of your future marital status

- You don't marry from Stage Three
- You only marry successfully from Stage Two
- Focus on marriage from Stage One is misplaced

Implications of Stage One

- Being in stage one IS NOT because you are single...it IS because you are "unhappy"
- 20% of EG ward may be in stage one
- A significant support system is required from families and church organizations to assist stage one singles
- Reluctance to get and maintain the amount of medical or counseling assistance that is required
- Most LDS literature is focused on singles in this stage
- Singles do get married from stage one but marriage NEVER fixes the problems of Stage One Singles

Implications of Stage Two

- Approximately 20% of EG Ward is in stage 2
- Most successful marriages between singles in stage 2
- While happy, they are also “vulnerable” because they are RISKING REJECTION
- They have A LOT of Dates....Or they actively work toward dating
- They understand that the “LORD’S DUE TIME” can be accelerated by individual action
- Women are more likely to be in stage 2 than men, and there are a higher number of women in stage 2
- Yet....it is harder for a woman to proactively do things to move or stay in stage 2

Implications of Stage Three

- >60% of the EG Ward is in stage 3
- >90% of frequent EG visitors are in stage 3
- The longer you are in stage 3, the harder it is to get out
- No one EVER gets married from stage 3
- "Too Good" at being single to give it up
- Your "FEAR" keeps you insulated from risk
- Involvement in "other things" becomes a distraction or an excuse for not dating

STATEMENT: "I don't have time to date"

ANSWER: "Oh really, at your age I don't think you have
time NOT TO DATE" ...tic tock

Lets Talk About Stage Three

The fact that you are in a singles ward, are interested in joining a singles ward, or are a frequent visitor to a singles ward shows, with some certainty, that you are not altogether satisfied being single, therefore not altogether satisfied being in stage 3

TRANSLATION: if you are really "OK" being single, then you wouldn't be in a singles ward to begin with

Lets Talk About Stage Three

Stage 3 can be a place of self deception

Stage 3 singles **WANT** to be in stage 2, **THINK** they are in stage 2, and **SAY** they are in stage 2, but clearly **ACT** as if they are in stage 3

Where Are You & Why Does It Matter

- Impacts how you interact with other singles, especially in dating, courting, and romance
- Helps you understand why you do some of the things you do
- Helps you understand why others act the way they do
- Allows you to form strategies to move from one stage to another
- Helps you decide what ward would be best for you and why

What does this mean to you?

IF YOU ARE STAGE ONE.....

- Get Assistance; Get Better
 - You may want to seek some professional help
- Realize your needs may be better served by being in a family ward
- Your problem IS NOT being single
- Get focused on being happy and productive; don't focus on getting married
- Stage one marriages are NOT successful

What does this mean to you?

IF YOU ARE STAGE TWO.....

- Successful dating relationships are most often built with another stage 2 single
- Understand the risks of dating singles that are in stage 1 or stage 3
- You can have a successful dating relationship with a stage 3 single but, at some point, you will have to "PULL" them into stage 2 if you want it to progress
- Realize you will have rejection and then relationship "pain" before you find ultimate success

What does this mean to you?

IF YOU ARE STAGE TWO...continued

- For women...you will have to change your paradigm of meeting/dating/courting because the supply/demand numbers are against you...you have to be creative...or get lucky
- Realize the “delicate” balance required to be ok with being single and yet wanting to “not be” single
- Staying in stage 2 for extended periods of time can be emotionally draining
- Movement between stage 2 and stage 3 is common

What does this mean to you?

IF YOU ARE STAGE THREE

- The majority of active LDS singles are in Stage 3...this is not a bad place
- Being in a singles ward may not be the best place for you if you are happy, content, and entrenched in stage 3 (not moving or willing to move into stage 2)
- You WILL NOT have a successful relationship (leading to marriage) from stage 3

What does this mean to you?

IF YOU ARE A MAN....

- You are most likely in stage 3
- You think dating "A LOT" means several times a year
 - Most of you here date less than required to really be stage 2
- Even if you don't date, you don't spend a lot of time thinking about it, and NEVER any time worrying about it
- You say "it will happen some day", but you seldom do anything proactive to make it happen
- You say "I can't afford it", "I haven't met anyone I want to date", or "I don't have time"....all INVALID excuses

What does this mean to you?

IF YOU ARE A MAN....

- You say "I want to marry someone attractive" (translation..."even though I'm 40 & not particularly good looking, I would really like to marry someone that is 30 & really cute")
- You say "I don't want to marry someone with kids", and yet, that may be the best chance you will ever have of being a father and having a family
- You are scared:
 - Of Rejection
 - Of falling in love
 - Of making a commitment
 - Of getting married

What does this mean to you?

IF YOU ARE A MAN....

- When you do "seriously date", you will most likely date a woman in stage 2
- You will wonder why she is going so fast
- You will wonder why she dumped you even if she loved you...after all, you've only dated for a year
- You won't eliminate her for valid reasons, you just lack the courage to move forward
- In the end you will say it just wasn't in the cards, it wasn't in The Lord's Due Time
- If you're in stage 2, **YOU WILL GET MARRIED!**
 - Do the math....women to men, 2 to 1. women to men in stage 2, 6 to 1
- If you are really ok in stage 3, you should be in a family ward

What does this mean to you?

IF YOU ARE A WOMAN....

- Roughly 30% of you are stage 2
- You want to date but you don't get asked out as much as you'd like
- You don't know how or don't want to do anything "creative" to have dating opportunities
- When you do begin dating a guy, you will look for reasons NOT to marry as opposed to reasons TO marry...your "**LIST**" gets longer & longer as you date the same person
- When you "seriously date", you will most likely date a man in stage 3

What does this mean to you?

IF YOU ARE A WOMAN....

- You will wonder why he is going so slow
- You will wonder why a guy you have dated for a year and loves you won't commit to be married
- In the end you will say "these guys are all goofs" I'm not doing this again
- You will tell your friends and your family that "I'm ok, this wasn't in the Lord's due time"
- If you don't date, don't think about dating, and are ok with that, you are stage 3
- If you are really ok in stage 3, you should be in a family ward

SUMMARY OF STAGES

The Elliot Groves Ward will be the most effective at achieving our mission if

ALL OF YOU

are in stage two

Keys to Moving to or Staying in Stage Two

FAITH

“...the Lord is able to do all things according to his will, for the children of men, if it so be that they exercise FAITH..”

1Nehpi 7:12

FAITH: stage 1 to stage 2

- Faith to Overcome Anger & Resentment
- Faith to Trust medical & counseling professionals
- Faith to be Believe
- Faith to be Forgiven & Forsake Sin
- Faith to be Healed

FAITH: stage 3 to stage 2

- Faith to risk rejection
- Faith to forgive
- Faith to trust another person
- Faith to “leave behind” your personal relationship tragedies
- Faith leading to “hope” that I can have “more”
- Faith to leave your comfort zone

FAITH: stay in stage 2

- Faith to have patience and be “long suffering”
- Faith to keep trying when there are more failures than successes
- Faith to be creative, open, and get out of your comfort zone
- Faith to trust in the Lord, after all you can do

Keys to Moving to or Staying in Stage Two

ACTION

“....even so FAITH, if it hath not Works,
is dead, being alone..” James 2:17

ACTION

Can you move to stage 2 by faith alone.....persuasion, time, happenstance, or luck....

Yes...but it is **VERY** unlikely
And.....

HOW'S THAT WORKING FOR YOU?

ACTION

Plans & strategies complete with goals and milestones are commonplace:

- Teachers have lesson plans
- Doctors prescribe treatment plans
- Business set strategies & objectives
- Missionaries set goals for baptisms
- Students choose and follow a set curriculum to earn a degree

ACTION

Nearly everything we accomplish of worth in life & in the church comes through carefully designed and well executed plans...

- College
- Career Development
- Financial Security
- Missions
- Going to the Temple
- Ward Activities & Meetings
- Conferences

ACTION

At this stage of your life, being single, and wanting to be married...

Do you think this will "JUST HAPPEN"?

HOW'S THAT WORKING FOR YOU?

ACTION

A note on decision making in the stages....

DO NOT confuse choosing between real alternatives and choosing between a real alternative and a wish....

WHAT DO I MEAN?

ACTION

THIS IS WHAT I MEAN.....

- Do I date person a or person b.....**CHOICE**
- Do I marry person a or person b.....**CHOICE**
- Do I marry person a or wait for the right person who is all I've ever dreamed of.....**WISH**

At this point in your lives, it may be time to stop trading real choices for wishes

ACTION

Do you have a “plan” to move to stage two?

Is it based on specific actions or is it based on luck?

HOW'S THAT WORKING FOR YOU?

CONCLUSION

- Most of you are in stage three
- Being in stage three is ok if:
 - You admit it
 - It is a conscious decision
 - You understand the implications
- If you want to be married, you better figure out how to get into stage 2 and then do it

CONCLUSION

I would love for all of you to tell
me....

ITS REALLY WORKING FOR
ME !!!!