



# Life

with a capital "L"

By Connally Gilliam

After a night of waiting tables, I was sitting around shooting the breeze with my co-workers. In typical fashion, the conversation eventually moved to sex.

As exploits were traded aloud, I tried to casually add my two cents about God making sex good and that within the right context — a marriage between a man and woman — it was a beautiful gift.

Suddenly it dawned on one fellow waitress what I, a single woman, was actually implying.

"Wait!" she declared with disbelief, "Are you saying that you don't have sex?"

You would have thought I'd said I had shot my mother in cold blood.

For a long time (I am still single and still desiring marriage) I have walked in this tension: I am a woman who is alive as a sexual being but who is not sexually active.

The culture around me — in ads on buses and lyrics in songs, in endless sitcoms and workplace conversations — could easily lead me to believe that because I'm not "gettin' it," I must be missing out on the one thing in this crazy world that brings Life with a capital "L."

And honestly, on lonely nights, I have wondered if my culture knows best.

After all, sex does make the world go round. If it weren't for sex, the population would dry up. But truthfully, I haven't spent much time worrying about the population drying up.

Rather, I have sometimes worried that I might. Perhaps my celibate route might be a

"B" grade or second-place path, leading me to a life that's a little less than it could be.

Have you ever secretly suspected that as well?

I'm wondering if those of us who have genuine questions in this arena (which I'd encourage any of us to explore with trusted friends) must be willing to discover that when it comes to issues of sexuality, an act of radical faith might be required.

The voices of the culture around us scream to the contrary, but God through His Word makes it unmistakably clear: Jesus came to bring us Life with a capital "L," and receiving His deeply gracious love and following hard after Him — not worshipping at the altar of sex and self-satisfaction — are His primary means.

One friend clarified it for me. When I admitted my fear that my currently celibate life (and heaven forbid I die unmarried!) might leave me a withered, asexual, dried up prude, she reminded me of an obvious truth I had somehow missed: It's not what someone is *not getting* that matters. Rather, what keeps a man or woman alive as a sexual (or just plain old human) being — married or single — is a giving of him- or herself.

Are my body and soul made for sex? Yes. Does it feel weird

to be celibate in a sex-saturated culture? Yes.

But the more I embrace Jesus, the self-giving Life-giver, the more I want my focus to be first and foremost on what I am giving. If there is a spouse to whom I am to give myself in marriage, and vice versa, I'd anticipate that giving to one another sexually would be a key and highly desirable component of life together!

But being celibate or sexually



active on God's terms means we must be loving, self-giving people toward God and others for His pleasure and glory.

At the end of the day, in any culture anywhere, this is the only path to Life with a capital "L."

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