

Single?



GOOD.

JANEY LAMAR

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TRULY
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1

False Start

Created Single

We all start our lives single, just as the first man, Adam, did in the Garden of Eden. As we grow and become more aware of our feelings and emotions, we begin to desire companionship. Over time, this can lead us through experiences that influence how we pursue dating and marriage. If you have found yourself single again after past relationships ended painfully, consider each one a false start. If you are currently dating, engaged, or married and questioning if God¹ is pleased, pray and ask the

¹ The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. “Strong’s Hebrew: 430. אֱלֹהִים (Elohim) — God, God.” *Biblehub.com*, biblehub.com/hebrew/430.htm.

Holy Spirit² to reveal whether you are experiencing yet another false start. **Jeremiah 33:3 AMP.** If He confirms this, ask for the strength to obey whatever He tells you to do next. Pray, too, that you do not try to stay if He tells you to leave. **Luke 11:28 NIV.**

A clear example of a false start can be found in American football. If an offensive player illegally moves before a play begins, the team is penalized and set back five yards, reducing its chances of scoring. An even harsher example occurs in track and field. If a runner takes off before the gun is fired, they are immediately disqualified from the race. Whether in American football or track and field, we understand that moving prematurely from the required position leads to setbacks.

While dating and marriage are not sports, beginning a relationship or entering marriage without God's blessing can feel very much like a false start. We can avoid this by choosing a godly season of singleness instead of pursuing sinful relationships. This choice helps prevent the consequences of setbacks such as heartache, custody battles, lost time and money, and other painful outcomes. And even if you have already faced setbacks, the good news is that God will not disqualify you from receiving His blessings, love, grace, or mercy. **Ephesians 1:5-8 AMP.**

² The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Godhead: Father, Son (Jesus), and Holy Spirit. He speaks, teaches, guides, can be lied to, resisted, grieved, and blasphemed. "Strong's Greek: 4151. πνεῦμα (Pneuma) — Wind, Spirit." *Biblehub.com*, 2019, biblehub.com/greek/4151.htm/greek/4151.htm.

My Own False Starts

My past decisions to choose sinful relationships led me to my own false starts. Growing up, I wasn't taught much about singleness being a good thing or about God's purpose for marriage. People told me to keep my virginity until I got married, but no one ever explained why in a meaningful way. **1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 NIV.**

As I got older, dating became a mix of excitement and drama. In my early twenties, I came up with the idea that you could find someone you liked and simply ride off into the sunset together. I thought it was up to me to do my own matchmaking. My friends, sisters, and I often shared stories about boyfriends and exes, discussing what we believed we wanted in men and holding onto the hope that one day we would find "the one."

I wanted someone tall, dark, and handsome—someone who shared my interests and was fun, faithful, and successful. My desires in a man were influenced by books written by celebrities, popular television shows and movies, and past experiences. They were also influenced by the dating relationships and marriages I observed around me, including those of my parents, aunts and uncles, siblings, and friends. Most of the dating relationships I witnessed ended because of conflict over money, cheating, or general unhappiness. Some of the marriages I observed ended prematurely through death or divorce. I can share without shame that, in my own family, I did not see a marriage in which anyone spoke or acted as though God had brought them together.

I later realized that most of what I wanted in a man was not shaped by God’s Word, but by incorrect beliefs and choices I made while living in sin. **1 John 2:16 NIV**. I did not know to rely on His Word, which defines the identities and responsibilities of husbands and wives in marriage. Nor did I realize that God had already determined my entire purpose and destiny. **Ephesians 1:11-12 AMP**.

Everything I believed about relationships from my teenage years through early adulthood led me into a relationship in which I became engaged and then single again. When I accepted the marriage proposal, I—not God—decided it was time for me to be married. **Daniel 2:21 AMP**. That decision was based on the length of the relationship, the fact that we were living together, and my belief that marriage would fix my sin of fornication.³

I even traveled to another country to plan a wedding without understanding God’s purpose for marriage. I bought workbooks, sought premarital counseling, and planned to have a period of sexual abstinence before the wedding. I believed I was going to abstain for spiritual reasons, but in reality, I was planning restraint for as little time as possible.⁴ I attempted these efforts hoping to earn God’s approval to marry, believing

³ Fornication includes all sexual activity outside of the covenant of marriage. “Strong’s Greek: 4202. πορνεία (Porneia) — Fornication.” *Biblehub.com*, biblehub.com/greek/4202.htm.

⁴ Abstinence is intentional separation from anything that would contaminate, corrupt, or distract. It is self-denial for the sake of greater faithfulness to God’s will. “Strong’s Greek: 567. ἀπέχουμαι (Apechomai) — Abstain, Refrain, Keep Away.” *Biblehub.com*, 2025, biblehub.com/greek/567.htm.

that premarital counseling and my false abstinence would guarantee the start of a successful marriage.

In doing this, I tried to take on a husband's leadership role, unaware that I was operating outside of God's order. **Ephesians 5:23 AMP.** I did not understand that a wife is called to respect her husband because of his responsibility to God as head of the household and his wife. **Ephesians 5:24 AMP.** At the same time, I was still broken by painful experiences in childhood and womanhood, carrying unresolved feelings from past relationships, and uncertain of my purpose. Despite all that was wrong, I still convinced myself that I was ready for marriage. **Proverbs 19:2 NIV.**

Language Confused

The way I tried to start marriage was similar to those who attempted to build a city and a tower to the sky after God flooded the earth. **Genesis 6:13 NIV; Genesis 7:12 NIV.** They built in rebellion⁵ against God, choosing to remain where they had settled after the flood. **Genesis 11:4 AMP.** God came down to see the city and tower, confused their language, and scattered them so they could no longer communicate or continue building against His will. **Genesis 11:5-8 AMP.** In the same way, I was trying to build a marriage in rebellion, even

⁵ Rebellion is the active, willful opposition to the revealed will of God. It is defiance more than error and shows a heart attitude that resists, contradicts, or seeks independence from God's divine authority. "Strong's Hebrew: 4805. מִרְיָהוּ (Meri) — Rebellious, Rebellion, Rebellious Manzzz." *Biblehub.com*, 2025, biblehub.com/hebrew/4805.htm.

though the Holy Spirit told me not to marry. If He had not stopped me, I would have continued in disobedience, holding on to the marriage and everything attached to it.

I can admit that the marriage proposal I accepted was not for God's glory but for my own, and that I carried pride during my engagement. **Isaiah 42:8 NIV; Proverbs 16:18 NIV.** I ignored the voice of the Holy Spirit and His instruction not to marry, choosing instead to focus on the destination setting, wedding playlists, the celebration, my dress, my ring, and my bridesmaids. **Hebrews 3:7-9 NIV; John 10:27-28 NIV.** I was glad to be getting married because I believed it would show exes that my fiancé made a commitment they were not man enough to make. **Philippians 2:3-4 AMP.** Pride made me feel the need to prove that I could make my own decisions and marry like everyone else. **James 3:16 AMP.**

To make it down the aisle, I wrestled in my heart and mind with the truth that I was about to disobey the Holy Spirit. **Ephesians 4:30 AMP.** I wanted my wedding day because deposits had already been paid and my dress was almost ready for pickup. I felt pressured to make it appear as though I was making the right decision. **1 Samuel 15:22 NLT.** If this wasn't the marriage God wanted for me, I believed I could deal with the consequences later. **Hebrews 3:15-17 AMP.**

I felt stuck because I didn't want anyone to know that I was aware the Holy Spirit was telling me not to marry. I felt as though He was asking me to do the impossible, since I didn't know anyone personally who had been brave enough to call off a wedding and engagement. I also knew that calling it off

would mean ending the relationship completely and moving out of the apartment I shared with my fiancé. I didn't want to deal with the break up or tell more than one hundred guests to cancel their flights and resort reservations.

At the time, I felt angry about the Holy Spirit's instruction against marriage because I believed He could be wrong. **Numbers 23:19 AMP; Proverbs 3:5-6 AMP.** I later came to understand that His warning was meant to protect me from further brokenness and to lead me toward finding good in singleness. **Isaiah 55:11 AMP.** Before calling it off, I heard the Holy Spirit say to me, "I have more for you." That was hard to believe because I did not yet have the faith to trust Him. **Hebrews 11:1-3 AMP.** I remember asking, "What more?" I could not understand why He would not allow me to remain comfortable where I was. **Isaiah 55:8-9 AMP.** I cried and prayed that He would let me stay, but that did not change His command to leave.

Like the people building the city and tower after the flood, I felt fine where I settled. But disagreements and insecurities continued in the relationship as I fought for the wedding day. In the end, God confused our language, and the marriage I thought I was building stopped. I finally surrendered to the Holy Spirit's command to leave.

All of my past relationships, beliefs, and efforts leading up to the marriage I thought I wanted were false starts. Because I didn't know better, I left the position of singleness prematurely in search of love and marriage, only to experience setbacks. The penalties I faced included brokenness, sadness, and confusion.

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Still, these false starts ultimately led me to God, and it was time for me to seek Him first.