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Annie: Hi friends! Welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun. I'm your host, Annie F. Downs. I'm so happy to be here with you today.

Before we dive into today's conversation, I want to tell you about one of our incredible sponsors, [AG1 by Athletic Greens](#). If I want to make sure I'm covering my nutritional basis for the day, I drink AG1. I know it's helping me get my daily start with essential brain, gut, and immune health support, and it has a ton of vitamins, probiotics, and nutrients from Whole Foods.

I just mix one scoop of AG1 in really cold water once a day. It makes me feel so much more energized and ready for the day. I also like to add some frozen lemon juice for a little something extra. It's just a really simple way for me to get all my vitamins and nutrients without having to count out and take a bunch of supplements.

Plus, if I'm running short on time in the morning, which I am, and if I'm traveling, which I often am, I just grab one of the travel packs. If there is one product that I had to recommend to elevate your health, it is AG1. And that's why I've partnered with them for so long. So if you want to take ownership over your health, start with AG1.

Try AG1 and get a free one-year supply of vitamin D3 plus K2 and five free AG1 travel packs that I love. You get those with your first purchase exclusively at drinkag1.com/soundsfun. That's drinkag1.com/soundsfun. Y'all check them out.

Intro: Today on the show, I get to talk with my college buddy, my longtime friend, Pastor David Platt. And we're talking all about singleness in the church. But I want to tell you why. Last summer when we did that podcast series, the Summer Lovin' series on dating, I asked those of you who are single to share your email address with us because I just wanted to send you something.

Legitimately, our hope was that 500 people would let me email them. Well, almost 20,000 of you, literally 20,000 of you, in about a week gave us your email address. So if you were one of those 20,000, you know we spent the month of June praying together that God would give us hope again when it comes to singleness and dating and marriage. And I just don't think we're done.

For the past six months here at AFD Inc., we have been dreaming up a way to keep talking about dating and being single and what that means in 2024 for people of faith. We wanted to do it in a bit more of a private community where we can really

share the good and the hard stories. So we're excited to announce today that we're officially launching the Single Purpose League. Y'all, it's going to be so fun.

So this is a Patreon community. If you're familiar with Patreon, amazing. If you're not, it is really simple. It's a paid membership. It is \$7 a month. So the cost of like one fancy Starbucks drink a month. And each month we're going to release one exclusive podcast episode just for Single Purpose League. Sometimes that'll be just me, and sometimes that'll be me and a guest.

And then we're going to do one livestream a month as well. We're calling it Our Chapter Meeting. We're going to have snacks. It's going to be great. You're going to live chat with me and Katie on our team who's kind of going to keep Single Purpose League on purpose and rolling. And we'll do some Q&As. And we'll get to hear from you too. It will be a chapter meeting. It'll be a gathering of all of us.

I want to be really clear though. This is not a matchmaking service, though men and women are welcome. This is not a dating app that we're creating. This isn't even like 101 tips on dating, though we will for sure talk about dating. This isn't a live look into my dating life, though I will talk more there than anywhere else about my personal experience as a single woman in 2024 as well.

But this is your invitation to a community of friends who want to talk about the good and the hard, the fear, the surprise, the hope, the heartache when it comes to being single right now. We're going to talk about what to do when you're in a season you don't want to be in. We're going to talk about how to handle the emotional roller coaster of singleness and dating, particularly in the faith space.

We're probably going to laugh a lot and maybe cry. I don't know. But ultimately, together, we're going to tackle this question: What is my single purpose? And what is my purpose while single?

So for all my single friends who have been asking God forever why you're still in this place, this is for you. For my friends who just walked through a breakup, oh, I'm so sorry, and also, this is for you. For my friends who are battling with loneliness and just hate it, this is for you. For my friends who are thriving in their singleness, this is for you.

We wanted to build a way to talk to you about it more that was a little quieter and a little more private than the wide open internet, and a way for you to talk to us and each other about it more.

Patreon has its own app and its own website, so you can comment and message, and get to know each other there. It is going to be, I think, a really special group to

be a part of. I'm really excited. All you have to do is go to patreon.com/Anniefdowns, and that is where you can join the Single Purpose League.

Again, it's \$7 a month. You'll find a list of all that is included there. I think you're going to love some of the surprises that are included. Again, it's patreon.com/Anniefdowns.

Because we're launching Single Purpose League today, we wanted to have a real conversation about being single in the church because, well, it is a whole thing. There's a lot of beauty to it, but there's also a lot of hurt and misunderstanding and disappointment.

So we invited Pastor David Platt back on so we can have an honest conversation about how can singles thrive in their church, what conversations could we be having with our pastors and church leaders and vice versa, and how do we help single people not feel invisible. But there is a portion of this conversation that we saved and continued only for people in Single Purpose League.

So after you finish this episode, that's a great way to get started over there. Again, that's patreon.com/Anniefdowns. That is where you will join Single Purpose League and where you'll hear the really important continued part of this conversation with David Platt that is just for Single Purpose League friends.

Today's episode was a major wowie zowie for sure. I'm telling you, there is a part that David says today that our staff continues to talk about that I have said to friends over and over that I had... I texted David after and said, "This is a book you need to write." I mean, this is mind-blowing today.

For married friends and for singles, this isn't just a conversation for single people. Our married friends need to understand what is going on for everyone that they sit near in the church, and that includes their single friends. I'm really thankful for David's insight and honesty today.

So here's our conversation on singleness in the church with Pastor David Platt.

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Annie: Welcome back to That Sounds Fun, David. Thanks for doing this today.

David: So good to be back. This is pure joy. Well, just any time, getting to spend time with you, Annie Downs. I know Heather and I had a chance to spend some time with you in person not long ago. It's really, really good to be back.

Annie: Thank you. It is great to see you. We're doing a little switcheroo in 2024. It is our 10th year of the podcast, so we are celebrating all year. The biggest change we're making is we're starting the conversation the way you're used to us ending them, so kick us off by telling us what sounds fun to you, David Platt. That's where we want to start this year.

David: Oh, what sounds fun to me right now? Well, I'm coaching, let's see, three of my kids, yeah, three of my kids basketball teams. So what sounds fun to me... Well, I would say what sounds fun to me is like winning a game. But that feels like too high, particularly for some of the younger kids. So that feels like too high a bar for fun. Just actually being able to bounce and shoot the ball I think sounds a lot of fun.

Annie: Just coaching children who take what you say and put it into action in a way where the ball stays at their hand.

David: Yes, in a way that is positive and fruitful and doesn't test my patience that much. That sounds fun.

Annie: Another friend of mine is coaching her church league high school girls. And last weekend I said, "How was the game?" She said, "45 to 4. But we scored twice." I was like, "Oh my God."

David: That doesn't sound fun.

Annie: Rec league, man, what a joy.

David: It takes a special person for that to be fun.

Annie: Yeah, right? Well, I am very impressed that you're coaching. But it is kind of inside your skill set, David Platt. I mean, you've been coaching all of us for a while. I mean, I didn't know... are you a basketball guy?

David: No. I got cut in eighth grade, and it was devastating. I don't think I'm actually over that. So, it's definitely not skill level that has led me to be a coach. It's more desire to be out there with the kids. And I feel like I know enough, especially the younger ages.

Annie: Yeah, yeah, yeah. You're like, that hoop is where the ball goes.

David: Yes, exactly. And I can draw out plays like, do this, do that. I can do that.

Annie: I thought just maybe after Georgia lost the SEC championship that you may have gone, "I can't do football anymore. I'm going straight to basketball. I'm giving up on this entire sport for nine months."

David: You know, I wasn't even going to bring it up, Annie.

Annie: We have to talk about it.

David: You're right. I mean, we did win two in a row. But we had a chance.

Annie: Listen, this is why no one's won three in a row, Platt. It's impossible to do.

David: Yes, yes. It was brutal. I was at a restaurant with friends. And when we turned the ball over on the 11, I was like, "I'm ready to go." I was the only Georgia person. I was like, "I'm ready to go." They were like, "Annie, it's like quarter to."

David: But you could feel it. You could feel it.

Annie: I know. I just knew we didn't have it. I was like, "Wait, I used to feel this all the time in 1999. I know this feeling."

David: It kind of tasted so good the other, and so it was kind of bitter to go back to it.

Annie: I know. So that was top of my list of things to discuss today.

David: Yes, great.

Annie: Okay, David, here's the other thing. Here at That sounds fun we are huge fans of Mike Kelsey. Will you talk about his installation at your church and kind of explain that to us? Because we all got to watch it online. I mean, it's beautiful. It's so beautiful.

David: It was awesome. I mean, this whole picture has been awesome. Just seeing the church affirm Mike, him stepping into this role. And then, yeah, we had a night where we just said, All right, we're going to celebrate God's grace in Mike and his wife, Ashley. And different people do charges to them, encouragement to them.

So there was a lot that was about Mike and Ashley, but it was a much bigger picture. It was about our church family, what God's done to bring us through a lot of challenging days. It was beautiful. And then not just our church family, to see a variety of churches come together from across city, from different backgrounds, in a way that hadn't happened. Certainly not in that way before.

So his dad, who's been a pastor for decades in downtown DC, for him to give a charge to Mike. And it was powerful. And he just talked about history and tying it to destiny and not forgetting the legacy that he's come from as he looks into the future. And we had this big gospel choir. So there was even musically, which we as a multi-ethnic church do a lot of different things anyway. But it was even more of an intentional nod to just the history of gospel music, Black gospel music. It was awesome.

And just to celebrate God's grace in Mike. I mean, obviously, I know people who listen to That Sounds Fun have heard and interacted with Mike. But I mean, he's faithfully served in this church for 16 years. And to see this church come around and affirm God's grace in him. My wife, Heather, she gave a charge to Ashley. That was really sweet.

So it was an awesome night on so many different levels. And just a great picture of the beauty of a multi-ethnic church that celebrates history when it's different and different people. And yet we come together and we love Jesus and we pursue Jesus together with all these diverse backgrounds. It's awesome.

Annie: So are y'all co-pastors? Can you kind of explain what it means that he is in this...? And what is his defined role? What is the title?

David: I was, before, the last couple months, I was the only lead pastor. I mean, we have a plurality of elders in the church, but I was the lead pastor. So Mike was affirmed as another lead pastor. So both of us lead pastors. So I'm just a big believer in plurality of leadership, not being dependent on one person and revolving around one person.

So Mike is another lead pastor. But we made clear when the church was affirming him that he, among us, was going to be the leader of lead pastors. So I'm yielding some of my leadership responsibilities to him in a way that I believe just fits with what God has called him to do and what God's called me to do. It's going to free me up to do some more things around the world that God's called me to do while still being a lead pastor in the church. So I'm not leaving.

And so, yeah, even that, it's been great on a personal level. And for Mike, God's prepared him and called him to this. So to see him step into even a primary leadership position among us is really significant.

Annie: Would you be okay if we linked to his installation service in the show notes?

David: Totally. I think it'd be great.

Annie: I'd love for people to watch it. It was just so special to see. We have a playlist of every episode he's been on. We're big fans. We just have a whole playlist of Mike Kelsey. But we'll just link to all that so people can follow along. It's amazing. What great leadership by you and what faithful leadership by him and Ashley. I just think the world of them. So thank you for letting me ask you about that.

David: Yeah. I shared this that night. Like, I'm a different person having served alongside Mike Kelsey. Like, I'm a different pastor. I'm, I believe, a better pastor and a transformed follower of Jesus as a result of sharing life with him and him speaking into my life in ways that I needed.

Annie: Well, you've been leading in the church... I mean, we're—I think we're the same grade. We went to Georgia together. You've been leading in the church for 20 years across multiple states and across multiple—even denomination kind of things and leading in IMB. We're talking a lot today about Single Purpose League and what we are building for our single friends. What have you seen change in the church about singles in the church over the 20 years that you've been serving?

David: Well, I would say even in those 20 years, there's just, I think... and I don't know all the numbers. I think you probably know the numbers better than I do. But even number of singles, just that in and of itself, I think is higher now than it was 20 years ago. I know it's crazy higher than it was 100 years ago. I mean, maybe like 90 percent of people were married, of adults were married, I think, like around 1,900. I mean, what a massive shift.

And I've seen that change certainly over the last 20 years, continue to increase, well, for a variety of reasons. Singleness as well as divorce, they're just... yeah, marriages breaking up. And so, wow, the need for the church to have a good biblical theology of singleness, understanding of what God says about singleness, and the need to be the church in a way that's...

If 90 percent of adults in a church are married, then that church community looks different. I mean, obviously, the basic biblical essentials are the same. But the way it plays out practically is different when you have maybe close to half of the adults in the church who are single.

The dynamics of what it means to be a church family take on a whole new level at that point. I used to joke that... I mean, I say joke, it's not really funny. But you go into like a... used to go into a Christian bookstore and you'd see all these books on marriage and parenting and about how it's so hard and all these different things. And you'd see very little, if anything, on singleness. And usually, the books on singleness would talk about preparing for marriage.

Annie: Yeah, that's right.

David: That's all I read in college. And then you can go read the hard books on marriage after that. It's like surely there's a better answer than this. And I do think churches have needed to, and in some ways have, stepped into that. But I think we still have a long, long way to go into really shepherding singles well to thrive in all the ways that the Bible and God clearly intends and designs singleness to be a picture of thriving.

Annie: So will you help me with that a little bit? Because, man, I want to crack open so many of those eggs you just gave us. But one of them is like, you know, helping singles to thrive in the church. One of the permissions I want to give churches and pastors who are listening is we know you don't know how to do this either. Like you didn't go through seminary and they didn't teach you 20 years ago, 15 years ago, 50 years ago for some of our pastors. I don't know that there's classes at seminary about pastoring a church that's 50 percent unmarried. Is there?

David: No.

Annie: So y'all are figuring out on the go as well.

David: That's a good word. And just personally, I mean, most pastors, I don't know the exact stats on this, but I mean, I'm almost confident it's super high anecdotally, right?

Annie: Yes.

David: The number of pastors who are single, that's a very small number. So, yeah, for that reason, too, it's kind of, Okay, you're working from behind from the start.

[00:19:47] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends, just interrupted this conversation real quick to share about one of our amazing partners, [HelloFresh](#). Listen, I don't love the whole grocery shopping thing. You know this about me. Meal prepping is not my thing, you know, but HelloFresh actually really works for me.

I have gotten it in New York and in Nashville, and I let HelloFresh do the grocery shopping and meal prepping for me. And it is great. Yes, I still have to cook it, but after a busy workday, it still saves me a ton of time. I literally just have to go pick it out of my fridge.

They've got all the ingredients right there for me, and the recipe is really easy to follow. The recipes are quick and convenient, and everything's delivered straight to my door. So you just choose the meal and select the delivery date. HelloFresh handles the meal planning and the shopping. So all you have to do is open your weekly box of ingredients and step-by-step recipes.

And did you know that HelloFresh does more than just dinners? This has been a game-changer for me. Their breakfast and their 10-minute lunches and snacks for adults and for kids. Listen, the breakfasts are so good. It is literally easier than ever to find something everyone in your home will enjoy, which for me is me.

So go to HelloFresh.com and use the code TSFFREE for free breakfast for life, you guys. One breakfast item per box while your subscription is active. That's free breakfast for life at [HelloFresh.com/TSFFREE](https://www.hellofresh.com/TSFFREE). And use the code TSFFREE. HelloFresh, America's No. 1 meal kit, and the No. 1 meal kit of my heart.

Sponsor: And I have one more amazing partner to tell you about, Shopify. Okay, business owners or potential business owners, if you've got a product that you're selling and want to make marketing simple. Marketing is so hard.

Shopify removes the guesswork with built-in tools to help you create and execute and analyze your online marketing campaigns. We all know it takes a ton of time to get your idea from brainstorming to the final product. So marketing and selling it needs to be as simple as possible.

We use Shopify to run shopanniefdowns.com where we get to bring you tanks and sweatshirts and books. It has been so easy to use.

Shopify is the global commerce platform that helps you sell at every stage of your business. So no matter what you're selling from clothes to prints to jewelry, Shopify helps you sell it everywhere. They have an all-in-one e-commerce platform and an in-person POS system. And if you're running a growing business, then you need the insights wherever you are. With Shopify's single dashboard, you can manage orders, shipping, and payments from anywhere.

Sign up for a \$1 per month trial period at shopify.com/soundsfun, all lowercase. Again, go to shopify.com/soundsfun now to grow your business no matter what stage you're in. [Shopify.com/soundsfun](https://shopify.com/soundsfun).

Annie: Did you hear the fun news? The Let's Read the Gospels guided journal comes out March 5th. You can pre-order it right now. We have loved going through the Gospels with you over on Let's Read the Gospels podcast.

And as we were talking about how special and sacred that has been, my publisher said, this really matters. So we decided to create this beautiful journal that includes a 30-day reading plan that we've never done together on the podcast. So it's brand new to us too. It also includes questions for you to process along the way and journaling prompts for you to go through.

We're going to do this book together as a community and on the podcast in April of 2024. So start thinking about who in your life you could invite to go through the guided journal and Gospels with you. Go ahead, get your copies of the Let's Read the Gospels guided journal today. You know what we say around here: you don't have to be in the Gospels every day to be changed, but every day you are in the Gospels will change you.

So go pre-order your copies of Let's Read the Gospels Guided Journal from Amazon or Target or wherever you love to buy books. This would make a great Easter gift for a basket or a birthday gift or just a little "it's a good Monday gift". So go pre-order your copies right now.

Okay, now back to our conversation with David.

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Annie: You know, I was watching a documentary on the television about pastoring, and one of the males in the documentary said, "so then I started looking for a wife because I knew in order to be a pastor, I had to get married." When I tell you David Platt, that is the first time I knew that was a filter for some men as they're going into pastoring. And I went, Oh, I wonder if that has been a narrative that I didn't know was existing parallel to me for my entire life. That women go into ministry and go on the mission field hoping to meet someone. And men think, I can't go into ministry or onto the mission field until I have met someone.

David: Wow. You know, that's really interesting when you put it that way, how that narrative is probably very prevalent.

Annie: I mean, did you see that in IMB? I mean, the Lottie Moon on down. There's a lot of women who went on the field unmarried.

David: No question. And I would say like even now, like, yeah, there's a very high number... Well, there's just a lot more women who are willing to go and wanting to go and committing to go overseas than there are men. Period. But I think there's a lot of reasons actually behind that.

But there's no question that it would be very uncommon to see a single man either pastoring or serving as a missionary. And it would be much more common to see a single woman in those circumstances. There's a lot to dive into there. Wow.

Annie: Right? I mean, Pastor Kevin and I get to talk about it because I get to say... we get to process through. If you have a teaching pastor and Annie on your teaching staff, we need to talk about dating for someone on a teaching staff and someone who is a pastor. So it's been really interesting.

You talked about helping singles to thrive. David, how do we move forward, thrive in our singleness when so many of us, not everyone, so many of us still desire a different life?

David: You know, even as you ask that, Annie, I'm like, Okay, I've got some scripture that's come to my mind. But at the same time, like I know... well, I haven't been married since I was like 21 years old. Like I realize, Okay, well, I want to speak like I do on anything, like on the authority of God's word, not my own experience, too. But I realize, Okay... so I just want to tread lightly here.

Here's where I go in my mind when it comes to singles thriving. I think it is really interesting. This is why I mentioned a biblical theology of singleness, because Old Testament, marriage was almost non-negotiable in a sense, because in part, think about the Old Covenant. Like the people of God actually spread through proclamation, not through spiritual regeneration like you see in the New Testament. It was through multiplying physically. And that's how the nation of Israel spread.

So what's interesting is when you get to prophecies in Isaiah that are talking about generations beyond just physical, it's like, whoa, there's something a whole different picture coming. And there's a major shift. When you get to the New Testament, there's a whole new covenant that is not based on physical bloodline, that is different.

So, I mean, you think about barrenness. That was like the curse in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, it's like you'll have children that are better than sons and daughters. That was supposed to be prophesied in Isaiah. So then you start to see, whoa, not only obviously Jesus single, but you see prominent people in the New Testament who are single in a way that you didn't see. And even when Jesus is talking about marriage and He talks about eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom, that in and of itself was shocking. Like, what? This can actually be a good thing?

So I guess that's where I think it really is important to hear God in His words saying that singleness really is a gift from God. 1 Corinthians 7 makes that very explicit. But in the spectrum of redemptive history in a way that's different from all that you

read about in the Old Testament, there's a whole different picture of family that arises in the New Testament. You're born again. You're into a new community.

So the other thing that comes to my mind when I think about theology of singleness that I think contributes to thriving, we talk a lot about how marriage is a display of the gospel. Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church. Wives love your husbands in the way church reflects church's love for Christ. Like, yes, marriage is a unique reflection.

But I think the way that sometimes can come across to those who are single is, oh, man, I'm missing out on a display of the gospel. But I would say the Bible makes really clear that singleness also is a unique portrayal of the gospel in a way that the singleness says, All right, what the world says, you don't actually need someone else to complete you. Like, Jesus really does fully complete you.

And you don't need expression of sexuality in this way to be a full person. Like, no, you're a full person. Which, just to point forward to heaven, like, we're going to be single in heaven, and we're not going to be expressing sexuality in the same way in marriage. I mean, that's what Jesus talks about in the gospel.

All that to say there's a foretaste of the kingdom to come in singleness. There's a picture of full identity in Jesus that's not portrayed in the same way in marriage. So I would just say both are good gifts and both display the gospel. And really starting there, I hope that for those who are single, you hear God saying, hey, you're part of my design in a unique way, in really good ways, in redemptive history, and in really beautiful ways when it comes to the gospel. And then that leads to, yeah, just a rest and contentment in God in singleness.

Annie: Yeah, that's beautiful. You know, because of the Let's Read the Gospels podcast, that eunuch part, I've read it 13 times out loud. It is so interesting because it is this, like, some were born this way. Some were made this way by community. And I bet there are some of our friends listening who are like, yeah, I'm a eunuch, not by my choice. I'm a eunuch by choice of other people. Though in the Bible it's talking about actual physical...

But, you know, I imagine there are certainly people who go because of where I live, because of the life I have. And then there's other people who could say, yeah, like, I mean, I've chosen this life because of what it allows for me and God. Is it okay across all three of those... is it okay to still desire marriage, even if you've chosen, well, I'm going to run as fast as I can and do as much as I can for God in my singleness? That doesn't mean I have the gift for my whole life, but I want to not waste these days?

David: Yeah. I think that's what Paul's after in 1 Corinthians 7, which is like the quintessential text on singleness. But I think he's after a contentment. At the same time, if you have desire for this, it's not wrong to desire marriage. It's certainly not wrong to pursue marriage.

In fact, I mean, you could look at Scripture and say, I mean, there is actually good and right desire for marriage. So that's not bad in any way. But I do think the point in 1 Corinthians 7 is to the extent of which that leads to a lack of contentment in the gift God's given you right now in this moment, then that can lead to unhealthy places. That's not going to lead to thriving as a discontentment. But there's a difference there.

I think it's probably a fine line between, Okay, I'm content, Lord, in where you've got me, and at the same time, I do desire this. So I'm trusting you with that desire. I'm putting that desire in your hands. I know I trust you to lead me and to fulfill that desire in due time or just however you desire to do it.

I mean, the thing I think about along those lines is when Heather and I were struggling to have kids. It was like, Okay. It was a fight for contentment and being childless. But there was a strong desire for children. And I think there's a way to hold both those.

And I think the key is, Lord, I'm trusting in You. I trust in Your leadership in my life. You are enough for me. I don't need this child, I don't need marriage for fulfillment. I desire this. I'm going to keep asking for that. But I'm going to ask for it with trust in You and with patience and with confidence that You are wiser than I am, and You're going to lead me and my life in ways that are good for me always. So I'm going to rest in You. And I'm going to keep expressing this desire to You.

Annie: I think that might be the challenge very often for me, and I'm guessing for a lot of our friends listening, is can I say I'm content without letting go of my desire? I don't know if it was caught or taught. I don't remember. But at some point what my brain memorized was you are content when the desire is gone.

But as I've gotten into my 40s and still unmarried, then I've started to go, Oh, wait, I actually love my life and still hold this great desire. And I didn't know I could keep both. I thought I had to abandon one for the other.

David: You know, that's really good. Wow, this applies to so much, right? I just think about Paul, even thinking about, "I desire to depart and be with Christ," which is better by far. He wants heaven, but he's content living on earth. So he's not able to be content because he's got this strong desire. There's actually a way to hold strong desire and contentment at the same time.

I think the key, right, it comes back to as long as that, so the contentment is rest and whatever God chooses to do with this desire. Obviously not doing things that go outside of His will and what He's revealed in His word to try to fulfill that desire. But just to trust in Him with it and to hold those two together.

And then it's like, well, of course, we live in a fallen world where things are not as they should be and all our desires are not fulfilled. One day they will be. Like all our desires will be fulfilled. But that's not the case now. So part of living in a fallen world is learning contentment. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. He's my contentment. And I've got desires for a variety of things.

Annie, I'm just thinking about things you know going on in our life and family where I have so many desires for what I want to see in my kids, for example. But there's a contentment in, okay, Lord, I'm trusting that you hold me and them in your hands and your leading. So I'm going to keep expressing those desires to you and I'm going to rest content in you.

Annie: Yeah, I'm thinking one of the things that's coming to my mind is while I'm holding, as an Annie... I mean, this is like me talking to you. As I'm holding this great desire, when you remind me of the Old Testament... I mean, we have a wowie zowie button. Have I shown you this, where it says wowie zowie? [wowie zowie] It's when you blow my mind we push the wowie zowie button. And it's my three-year-old nephew.

But I'm having a wowie zowie moment when you're talking about this because while I'm going to hold this great desire, I'm also going to say to you, man, the release from the pressure of the Old Testament of the way to build family is one way. I mean, I've read that in my life. But you saying like, no, the New Testament actually says... and people talk to me a lot about having spiritual children. It is very kind how much people talk to me about that.

But it is never registered into my soul like what you're talking about of like, oh, this actually is the way Jesus said. Not the only way. But this is like the next way was to make sure you're raising spiritual children. And if you said to me, Annie, I'm sorry, but you're barren from raising spiritual children, I could have a Hannah moment. I could have a Hannah moment of like, Wait, I don't get to do that? Wait, that's all I want to do. And that is why Hannah felt that way is partly because the only way the nation grew is if the families grew physically.

David: Yes.

Annie: You blow my mind, David Platt.

David: I mean, I was just walking through Ruth the other day, and I was like, Wow, like Ruth and Naomi, that was like the curse of all curses. They were totally barren, and it was like their family was going to be extinct. And God stepped in and brought redemption.

But that's not the picture. That's not the picture of the new covenant. So when you think about it, wow, to be single in the Old Testament was totally undesirable in that sense. And yet you see these promises. Like there's coming a new day. And then Jesus Himself and Paul, and again... but that's pretty revolutionary, even in redemptive history, like singleness being desirable in this way. Again, not to the exclusion of marriage also being desirable, but in a very different way. Family looks different.

Annie: I'm just like, My family line will never be extinct.

David: Yes.

Annie: And they want to be in my will, and we can't do all Christmas together like a traditional family. But I'm like, oh, my family line will never be extinct because I disciple people who are then discipling people. And therefore, right, never extinct.

David: Yes. I mean, think, Isaiah 54:1, Sing, O barren woman. Why burst into song? Because the Lord your maker is your husband. And he's going to... yeah.

Annie: Extend your tent poles.

David: In Isaiah 56, I think it is, Eunuchs, don't worry. Your name will not be cut off because this kingdom, as it's coming, like looking forward, is not dependent on physical offspring. It involves spiritual offspring. And it will be better than if you had sons and daughters.

Annie: That's so cool.

David: I mean, what Jesus is saying in the Gospels is just fulfillment of that and obviously what He's doing. I mean, that's the whole picture of discipleship, even in a willingness to leave behind family. And there's a picture there. And this is, I think, part of what 1 Corinthians 7 is saying, too.

Like there is a picture of actually letting go and sacrificing in the sense of singleness for the sake of the kingdom, when it comes to Singleness for the spread of the gospel in the world that many people have said, Okay, I'm going to embrace

singleness in this way, and some for a lifetime, to say, but I want to make it count for the spread of the gospel. And that spiritual offspring you're talking about.

Annie: I mean, that's what we're hoping with Single Purpose League. We don't want anybody to stay single if they don't want to be single. Like we're all for everybody finding their person. But also it's like, man, we want to talk about how purposeful this is. And you are on this planet right now for a reason, and you are unmarried today for a reason. You may meet the guy or girl tomorrow, but for today, what does it look like to make family, to make spiritual offspring? That's cool, David. That is so cool.

David: That is definitely where my mind goes, Annie, when I think about, okay, and whatever the number is, we'll just use half generally. If half of followers of Jesus are single, that's like a spiritual force for the spread of the gospel, for spiritual family in the world. In a world where three billion people have little to no knowledge of the gospel, like that's a spiritual force going for it.

And not just around the world, but right here and from here around the world, the opportunities that are there. I mean, we talk all the time at Radical just about the opportunities. We have more opportunities today to spread the gospel to the nations than ever before in history with travel, with technology, with the globalization of today's marketplace, the opportunities for work around the world. And it's harder to take some of those opportunities when you are married with six kids.

Annie: Totally.

David: It's a whole different picture when you're... and that's what 1 Corinthians 7 is literally saying. You're not tied down in the same way. So maximize that. Like, what are the unique opportunities you have in this time, in this moment for the spread of the gospel from where you live to the ends of the earth? Like, let's step into that.

Annie: Let's go. Right? Right.

[00:41:57] <music>

Sponsor: Hey, friends, just interrupting this amazing conversation one more time to share about one of our great partners, MOSH. I'm trying to be intentional about what I eat and how I take care of my body. I'm always looking for an on-the-go snack that has a lot of protein. Ladies, are you with me?

MOSH Bars is a new favorite. Okay, get this. MOSH was founded by Maria Shriver, let's go, and her son, Patrick Schwarzenegger, because they wanted to

create a conversation about brain health through food, education, and research after Maria's father suffered from Alzheimer's. They have six delicious flavors. Listen, I love that cookie dough crunch. And each has 12 grams of protein and are made with real ingredients to support your brain health.

They also have a line of plant-based protein bars that come in three delicious flavors. MOSH also donates a portion of all their proceeds from your order to fund gender-based brain health research. If you want to find a way to give back to others and fuel your body and your brain, MOSH Bars are the perfect choice for you.

Head to moshlife.com/tsf to save 20% off plus free shipping on either the best-selling trial pack or the new plant-based trial pack. That's 20% off plus free shipping on either the best sellers or plant-based trial pack at moshlife.com/tsf. Thank you, MOSH, for sponsoring this episode. And thank you for those delicious bars. I am in love.

Annie: Did you hear the fun news? The Let's Read the Gospels Guided Journal comes out March 5th. You can preorder it right now. We have loved going through the Gospels with you over on Let's Read the Gospels podcast. As we were talking about how special and sacred that has been, my publisher said, this really matters.

So we decided to create this beautiful journal that includes a 30-day reading plan that we've never done together on the podcast. So it's brand new to us, too. It also includes questions for you to process along the way and journaling prompts for you to go through.

We're going to do this book together as a community and on the podcast in April of 2024. So start thinking about who in your life you could invite to go through the Guided Journal and Gospels with you. Go ahead, get your copies of the Let's Read the Gospels Guided Journal today. You know what we say around here. You don't have to be in the Gospels every day to be changed. But every day you are in the Gospels will change you.

So go pre-order your copies of Let's Read the Gospels Guided Journal from Amazon or Target or wherever you love to buy books. This would make a great Easter gift for a basket or a birthday gift or just a little, "it's a good Monday gift". So go pre-order your copies right now.

And now back to finish up our conversation with David Platt.

[00:44:44] <music>

Annie: But there are some of our friends, probably me included in some ways, who just went through the holidays and was like, certainly I won't be single in this holidays of 2023. And then we were. So we're starting a new year. And there is disappointment in this, too.

I mean, this is true for married and not married. But we are specifically talking about singleness. But everybody can feel this. Like, how do we serve God when we're disappointed with His behavior? How can we serve Him and fully run after these things when we are disappointed in what He has handed us?

David: You know, where my mind goes there, is, 1 Corinthians, 12, like Paul pleading, obviously it's different, thorn in the flesh. But he's like asking for this: God to do this, to do that. And he asks over and over again, and God says, no, My grace will be sufficient for you.

I definitely don't want to gloss over in any way the real emotion and hurt or... I don't even know the best way to describe that longing unfulfilled and some of the emotions that come with that. But in 2 Corinthians 12 way to really press into the Lord with that. We're in community. I mean, that's, again, part of the picture of we need family. None of us can do that alone. And that's the real danger, right?

That, yeah, someone who's single, if not connected to good brothers and sisters in Christ, finds himself walking that journey by themselves. And that's never God's design. So in community to press into the grace of Jesus, to pray for and honesty, to share some of that, to share that struggle, to share that burden with others.

I just thank the Lord. So he daily bears up our burdens. He counts our tossings in the night, just to press into Him with that. And with others into Him in that. At the same time to hear His truth spoken over us that "my grace is sufficient for you, my power is made perfect in your weakness and I've got a purpose in this. And you don't see it all, but just keep pressing on and trusting. I've got a purpose in this. And it's a really good purpose. It's a really good purpose. And so don't miss the purpose, especially...

Again, it goes back to 1 Corinthians 7. We're only here for a little bit. So let's press in with our hurts. Oh, now just one other place. I know I'm talking a lot, but-

Annie: You're doing great.

David: ...my mind goes biblically just... I mean, the number of people without Christ who experienced some of those emotions or who experienced some of that loneliness or whatever it might be, like the opportunities to be alongside. You'll love this, Annie.

I was just preaching this last week and I was preaching on patience in the middle of suffering in a fallen world and fixing your eyes on another world. The whole time I'm preaching, I see this... She's a mid-30s, single woman and she's in a wheelchair. A couple of years ago, she had a massive stroke and it just... I mean, everything was fine.

And then now she has a hard time speaking. She can hardly move. But every time I got to a point just about the hope of the gospel, I saw her hand just raise up a little bit and she kept raising it. It was awesome. I stopped at one point in the sermon was just like, I see you, but the Lord sees you and knows you and is with you.

But the reason I bring it up now, like there's two single women beside her who are just walking alongside her in every way she needs and are doing things for her that they're able to do in part because of their singleness. And it was a beautiful picture of the church, of just the comfort of Christ in one person's life overflowing in the comfort of Christ in somebody else's life.

Annie: Oh, I love it. We're gonna keep chatting you and I over at the Single Purpose League so that people can hear some deeper stuff about what's going on in the church and what we can do today with how did we get here? Like, how did we get here kind of feelings.

But I would love for you, as we finish up here on That Sounds Fun, will you just kind of give a call to single men and women of what to do next? Like, what's our next thing? Like, what's the next right thing to do in our singleness and in our faith?

David: Oh, all right, the call. Well, one, press into Jesus like never before. And that's whoever you are. But like never before. I believe over the next six months or year God wants you to experience deeper intimacy with Him than you've ever experienced before. So press into Him like never before. Do that with community. Like, be around brothers and sisters in Christ who are pressing into Him like never before. Like, if you just do that, then things are gonna be a lot different. So don't skip over that. Like, press in in that way.

And then like, yeah, before the Lord, if He's given you a desire for marriage, then press in with that desire to the full. Like, don't be bashful. I think that's one of the things that's just come to my mind more and more as we've talked. Like, yes, like lay that before the Lord. And even to the extent of which God leads you to, pursue that.

And don't think that's lack of contentment. But do it with trust in the Lord. Do it open-handed. Lord, I'm trusting you with that. Ask Him for Him to do. Again, think about when we were praying for children. Like, we're asking Him for children all

the time, and we're saying, we trust in You. There's a way to do that with marriage too. Asking Him and trusting you, pursuing that, but open-handed and at the same time.

So as long as He continues to give this gift of singleness, whether or not it's a gift you desired or not, it is to believe it's a gift from Him and to say, I wanna steward it. Singleness is a stewardship issue. For this moment, you've been entrusted with a gift from God that enables you to do a variety of things, more unfettered and more focused than if you were married.

So, how can you press into spiritual offspring and making disciples of the nations and glorifying God in your work and building up your church, and loving those who are in need around you, serving... Like don't hold back in those ways as you're resting in Jesus.

Annie: Yeah, that's it. Will you do one more thing? Will you talk to our married friends about half their church being single?

David: Yeah, it's really good. I mean, for any pastors who are listening now too, don't forget that reality. Like, I catch myself when I'm like, hey, almost like assuming people have a husband or a wife, sometimes with an illustration I'm using or this or that. Don't do that. Sort of be really sensitive. But then, yes, for married friends, well, one, show the gospel in your marriage, and then two, celebrate the gospel in singleness. Celebrate the gospel in singleness.

I just think so many times those who are married, just almost... I don't know if we would say this, but it comes across as looking at singles as other or less than in some ways. I mean, I think that's part of why it's hard for a pastor to be single. So all that to say, to celebrate the gospel in singleness, to support in every way, to be the family of God, to realize, Okay, by God's grace, God's given you a husband or a wife to share life with. But He's also called you to be family.

You're living for spiritual family too. You're not just living for the people in your house. Like, yes, you have a special stewardship with the people in your house, but you're a part of a bigger kingdom picture too. So don't lose sight of the new covenant. You're not just about physical procreation here. You're not just about carrying on your family line. This is about a spiritual family.

So look around. If 50% of your spiritual family is single, then that means you're, yeah, welcome into your home, gather your arms around, listen to, learn how to, best love, support, serve those who are single around you, partner together with in the gospel. None of that's gonna happen accidentally. All that is gonna have to happen intentionally. So to be intentional about all those things.

Annie: That's true for all of us. Nothing happens accidentally. You gotta be intentional. If you want to shape your life with Christ, then we don't float. You gotta have an oar in this boat if you're gonna shape your life, yeah. David, that is so helpful. Thank you so much for helping us kick this off and really like think about this.

So you and I will jump over to Single Purpose League and we will keep chatting there. Before we go there, would you just mind praying for us? Like for singles, for married, just pray for 2024 and what God might have particularly for our single friends.

David: Yes, yes, God, we ask for, well, all these things we were just talking about. I pray over every single person listening right now, single or married, that 2024 would be a year of deeper intimacy with You than they have ever experienced before. And I ask for that boldly and believing. You desire that for every single person who's listening right now. So I pray, bring it about, God, and bring about fruit from that in our lives that resounds to Your glory.

We pray specifically over our married friends. God, we pray for the beauty of the gospel to be on display in husbands sacrificially loving their wives and wives reflecting the church's love for Christ and their love for their husbands.

And God, we pray for the beauty of the gospel and singleness, for a beauty of contentment, even with desire, as we've talked about. God, for a rest in you, for a joy in You, Your spirit, an ever-increasing sense of, knowledge of, experience of completeness in You, of peace from You and zeal from You and for You and for Your glory.

God, we pray that this would be a fruitful 1 Corinthians 7, like fruitful year. Maybe you're coming back, Lord Jesus in 2024. We ask, may this be the year. Come quickly and earlier in the year, as soon as possible, as best. Help us all to live like this, but especially in light of Your exhortation in 1 Corinthians 7 for singles to live in light of the times we're in that are really short and to make the most of them.

Help us all to make disciples of the nations that are gonna live for spiritual offspring with rest and confidence and hope in You. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Annie: Amen.

[00:57:00] <music>

Outro: You guys, isn't he the best? I mean, wowie zowie. [Wowie zowie]. I know. Okay, Single Purpose League is now open over at patreon.com/anniefdowns. You can

hear the rest of our episode with David there when you sign up to become a member.

We saved two questions for this bonus content. People say all the time, "My church doesn't help singles. What do we do?" And what we know statistically is that loneliness is at an all-time high and it is physically painful. It's impacting our bodies. What do we do? That is what we get to talk to David Platt about over in the Single Purpose League. So meet us over there. Dear single friends, come join the Single Purpose League and listen to what he has to say.

And if you're married and have some single friends in your life, would you let them know about the Single Purpose League? Our hope is to serve a lot of singles, this year particularly, and help us really identify some deeper ways that our purpose is playing out in 2024 as a person who is not married or not married yet or not married right now.

And if you have any questions from this episode, drop them in the Q&A box on your Spotify app if you're a Spotify listener. Ask them inside of Single Purpose League. There is a place where we can all talk to each other in Single Purpose League, so do it there. Or you can shoot them to us on Instagram. Just DM them to @ThatSoundsFunPodcast and we'd love to answer them over there as well.

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Facebook, Patreon in the Single Purpose League. I am going to be there with you. Anywhere you need me, that's how you can find me.

I think that's it for me today, friends. Man, am I thankful we are getting to do this together. Feels like a new day at AFD Inc., where we are talking about what matters most to you and to me, and I am really excited about it. So go out or stay home, do something that sounds fun to you, like joining Single Purpose League, and I will do the same.

Today, what sounds fun to me... what does sound fun to me today? Today, what sounds fun to me is I would love to be outside for a minute. I need some vitamin D in my life, so I am getting outside today.

Y'all have a great week. We'll see you back here on Thursday with my friend, one of my favorite pastors, Terry Crist. We'll see y'all then.