

Being Single Through the Holidays – Leslie Kalis

Leslie has been a faithful member of the Reconciliation Ministries leadership teams in Brighton and Troy for many years. It is a joy to see the Lord flow through her heart with strength and grace.



The holidays are a time for family, faith and fun. It's a time for giving gifts and spending time with those we love. It's a time for planning and decorating, anticipation and expectation. A time when we reminisce past Christmases, when things were better or perhaps worse. Either way, they tend to bring out the deepest longing in us for love and family. For those of us who are single it can be a time that reminds us of the husband or the wife that we don't have, or loved ones we've lost through divorce or death, or the children we desire and never got. Apart from that, it can be a reminder that we are alone and this can often be a dreaded season.

When I first began to think on this subject, my mind went to the natural things to do that would help me enjoy the season... bake cookies for someone... volunteer your time at church, in a nursing home, or at a soup kitchen serving those less fortunate... do a Christmas puzzle... join a choir... have friends over to make wreaths and drink hot chocolate... start an exercise program or a Bible study. These are all good things, but I realized they are just diversions. They just stave off any loneliness or sadness we may be feeling for another time. Yet, at the end of the Holiday when all the gifts are given and the decorations are taken down and put away and families go back home, we are still the same inside only we are no longer reminded of it quite so blatantly. At least we made it through the holidays and life can be normal again. Right?

The world gives us a rosy picture of what Christmas is supposed to look like and what romance is supposed to look like. All of the "happily ever after's". I think all of us to some extent have bought into it. We watch the movies that give us warm emotions and stir longings in us for this dream life that promises to fulfill us, but many times they just create unrealistic expectations. If we look at the world today, we see empty promises and broken cisterns. It's no longer about giving ourselves to others and how we can serve them, but it becomes about how we can be served. It's no longer about Jesus. It becomes about us.



Jesus shows us what Christmas looks like in Himself. He shows us that love came to give. And that the greatest of all is servant of all. The life of Christ is our greatest example. Should we do no less? A friend of mine told me a story of a childhood friend who was very concerned about a birthday party she got invited to. Was she going to have a good time there? She voiced her concern to her mother who wisely responded, "You just make sure everyone else is having a good time and you will too." Jesus says, "When you do it to the least of these, you have done it unto Me." Let's change our focus to Jesus, and look for ways to serve others this season. In so doing, we honor our Lord and are refreshed ourselves. It's only in Christ that we are truly fulfilled and He sees even the smallest gesture of good and will reward us.

“...if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.” Isaiah 58:1

I have known the frustration of unfulfilled desires and the deep pain of dashed hopes and lingering sadness. I grew up with a wonderful mother who was the only love and safe feeling I knew because I was scared of my father. Because she was a stay at home mom, my first day of school was my first separation from her. We only lived a couple blocks from the school. Hand in hand, my friend and I walked to kindergarten in our new dresses with great anticipation and delight. It would become a day that changed my life.



We were going out to recess and the teacher pulled me aside to tell me that my mother was in the hospital and would not be home when I got there. I don't remember what else took place in that conversation, only that my heart was gripped with fear. All I thought was that my mother died. I died on the inside that day. I found a whole in the fence and ran home to an empty house.

I lost something that day. I shut down inside. Life was too painful. My heart lived with this expectation that my mom would die at any time and I never told anyone. I just suffered in silence. It would be 32 years before the Lord would miraculously drop that fear from my heart and set me free, but it still left me on a lifelong search for that love and safe feeling that I lost that day.

One day the Lord asked me to give Him my right to be loved. Was He serious? This is what I lived for. I didn't care about money, or fame, or position. I just wanted to be loved. How could He ask that of me? He gave us a desire to be loved as human beings and now He wanted me to give it to Him? I fought this for weeks, reasoning that if I gave this to Him I would never be loved again. It was my Isaac. Could I offer it up? Would I abandon this pursuit to be loved in life and put it on the altar?



I finally said, “Yes, Lord, I will give You my right to be loved and I will never be loved again.” I truly left that at the cross to be His. To my amazement, about two weeks later that “drive” to be loved and feel safe inside had left me. What once consumed me was gone. He exchanged my greatest need in life for “resting” in Him. Now I feel truly loved, accepted and complete in Him beyond all I could ask or think. I am never alone because He is with me.

What about you? Will you lay your very self at the foot of the cross this Christmas season and trust the One who left His Father's side in glory to come and give His life for you, so that You could have it more abundantly? I pray that you will truly know the love of Jesus deep down in your soul. I pray that you will and that you experience Christmas with Christ, Himself, in a new way.