



**North American Division of the Seventh-day
Adventist Church**

An Army of One

**Men's Day of Prayer
September 5, 2015**

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About the Author of the Sermon

Dr. Claudio Consuegra



Dr. Claudio Consuegra is the Family, Men's, and Single Adult Ministries Director for the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. Claudio was born in Colombia, South America. He has served as pastor in various conferences throughout the United States. He has also been a law-enforcement, hospital, and hospice chaplain, a marriage and family counselor, and conference department director and administrator. Claudio holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in theology from Columbia Union College, a Master of Science degree in Counseling Psychology from Radford University, and a Doctor of Ministry degree in Family Ministries from Andrews University.

Claudio, and his wife of 34 years, Pamela, who is the Associate Director of Family Ministries for the North American Division, have a rich background in the area of family ministries having worked as a husband/wife team in numerous conferences, hosting a live call-in family show for LifeTalk radio for three years, and authored numerous journal articles as well as several books.

They have two daughters: Diana- an English teacher at Takoma Academy, Hadassah- a general surgery resident in York, Pennsylvania, and a son-in-law, Gregory, a Speech and Language Pathologist.

Claudio and Pamela are passionate about building strong, healthy marriages and families for God's Kingdom.

Suggested Order of Service

Men's Ministries Day of Prayer
September 5, 2015

Call to Worship- Opening Prayer

Opening Hymn

Onward Christian soldiers! – Adventist Hymnal #612

Offering

Children's Story

Scripture Reading

1 Corinthians 7:6-7

Pastoral Prayer

1. For the men to be empowered by the Holy Spirit
2. For the men's family life: mothers, wives, children and others
3. For the men's work and church life
4. For men to become friends of God and each other

Special Music

[Select a Joyful song of Victory and Strength
Preferred- Male Quartet, or Male Choir]

Sermon (Provided)

An Army of One

Closing Hymn

Soldiers of Christ Arise – Adventist Hymnal #616

Closing Prayer

An Army of One

1 Corinthians 7:26-27

Army slogans have changed through the year.

Probably the one we all remember the most is Uncle Sam pointing the finger and saying “I Want You.”

In the 50’s and 60’s the slogan was “Look Sharp, Be Sharp, go Army.”

In the 70’s the slogan changed to “Today’s Army wants to join you.”

From 1980 to 2001 the slogan was “Be all (that) you can be.”

And then it changed again in 2001 for just a few years, until 2006, to “An Army of One.”

The Army of One slogan was intended to mean that you are only as strong as your weakest link.

I’d like us to remember this morning that being a man is not a sin, or some sort of terminal medical condition.

Jeremiah, the prophet, was a man.

Jesus was a man.

Paul – the greatest Missionary was a man.

In fact, I want us to look at what Paul, a man, wrote under inspiration, in his first letter to the church in Corinth. We find his remarks in chapter 7.

I will be reading them in the paraphrase known as “the Message.”

1 Corinthians 7 is one of the most extensive and most significant chapters in the New Testament, indeed in the entire bible, as it relates to marriage and singleness.

I want us to read most of it, and then we’ll consider what he says and its implications to men today.

1 Now, getting down to the questions you asked in your letter to me.

7 Sometimes I wish everyone were single like me—a simpler life in many ways! But celibacy is not for everyone any more than marriage is. God gives the gift of the single life to some, the gift of the married life to others.

8 I do, though, tell the unmarried and widows that singleness might well be the best thing for them, as it has been for me.

9 But if they can't manage their desires and emotions, they should by all means go ahead and get married. The difficulties of marriage are preferable by far to a sexually tortured life as a single.

17 And don't be wishing you were someplace else or with someone else. Where you are right now is God's place for you. Live and obey and love and believe right there. God, not your marital status, defines your life. Don't think I'm being harder on you than on the others. I give this same counsel in all the churches.

22 I'm simply trying to point out that under your new Master you're going to experience a marvelous freedom you would never have dreamed of. On the other hand, if you were free when Christ called you, you'll experience a delightful "enslavement to God" you would never have dreamed of.

24 Friends, stay where you were called to be. God is there. Hold the high ground with him at your side.

25 The Master did not give explicit direction regarding virgins (young ladies), but as one much experienced in the mercy of the Master and loyal to him all the way, you can trust my counsel.

28 But there's certainly no sin in getting married, whether you're a virgin or not. All I am saying is that when you marry, you take on additional stress in an already stressful time, and I want to spare you if possible.

29 I do want to point out, friends, that time is of the essence. There is no time to waste, so don't complicate your lives unnecessarily. Keep it simple—in marriage,

30 grief, joy, whatever. Even in ordinary things—your daily routines of shopping, and so on.

31 Deal as sparingly as possible with the things the world thrusts on you. This world as you see it is on its way out.

32 I want you to live as free of complications as possible. When you're unmarried, you're free to concentrate on simply pleasing the Master.

33 Marriage involves you in all the nuts and bolts of domestic life and in wanting to please your spouse,
34 leading to so many more demands on your attention. The time and energy that married people spend on caring for and nurturing each other, the unmarried can spend in becoming whole and holy instruments of God.
35 I'm trying to be helpful and make it as easy as possible for you, not make things harder. All I want is for you to be able to develop a way of life in which you can spend plenty of time together with the Master without a lot of distractions.
36 If a man has a woman friend to whom he is loyal but never intended to marry, having decided to serve God as a "single," and then changes his mind, deciding he should marry her, he should go ahead and marry. It's no sin; it's not even a "step down" from celibacy, as some say.
37 On the other hand, if a man is comfortable in his decision for a single life in service to God and it's entirely his own conviction and not imposed on him by others, he ought to stick with it.
38 Marriage is spiritually and morally right and not inferior to singleness in any way, although as I indicated earlier, because of the times we live in, I do have pastoral reasons for encouraging singleness.

What can we learn about God's view of men?

The overall, main point wants for us to learn from his letter to the Corinthians is that whatever place you are in life, as a man -- whether you are married or not -- we all need to seek God, seek to have a good, strong relationship with Jesus and find contentment Him.

To the church in Philippi Paul wrote:

Actually, I don't have a sense of needing anything personally. I've learned by now to be quite content whatever my circumstances. I'm just as happy with little as with much, with much as with little. I've found the recipe for being happy whether full or hungry, hands full or hands empty. Philippians 4:11-12 (MSG)

What was his secret?

Whatever I have, wherever I am, I can make it through anything in the One who makes me who I am. Philippians 4:13 (MSG)

The secret is to learn to be content in life, and to know that whatever stage in life in which we may find ourselves, Jesus is our all in all, Jesus is with us, right next to us, will never leave us.

It is in Jesus that we find our strength.

With Jesus we're not an Army of One.

So today, even if you feel like an Army of One, I want you to know some Keys to Living Life Strong, stronger than Army Strong!

1. To Live Strong we need to Find our Identity in Christ.

Your Identity answers the question, *Who am I?*

Paul writes:

But be sure in deciding these matters that you are living as God intended, marrying or not marrying in accordance with God's direction and help, and accepting whatever situation God has put you into. This is my rule for all the churches. 1 Corinthians 7:17 (TLB)

God defines your life" (MSG)

The Lord should be our Identity.

If someone were to ask you, who are you?

How do you answer?

He loves us!

We belong to Him!

We are fearfully and Wonderfully Made!

We are a New Creation in Christ!

We are Sons of the King.

We are Saved by His Grace, through faith.

So the first thing we all must do is to seek to discover and nurture who we are in Christ!

And the first and best way to do this is by spending time daily with Him, in the study of His letters to you and in conversation with Him in prayer.

2. But then take it a step further. It's not enough to just find our identity in Him, we also need to find Our Significance in Christ.

Significance answers the question, *What is my Value in life?*

As we review the words of Paul to the Corinthians, one point that stands out is that we are valuable to God. . .so, don't undervalue yourself, don't neglect yourself, don't limit your value.

Our value to God is based on what He gave in exchange for us.

He gave His one and only Son, equal to Him in all things, in exchange for us.

Think about it:

What marvelous love the Father has extended to us! Just look at it—we're called children of God! That's who we really are. 1 John 3:1 (MSG)

Over and over in the Bible God tells us how much value he places on us. . . because we are His children.

Listen to just a sample of what He thinks of us:

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works. Ephesians 2:10 (NKJV)

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: "we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God." 2 Corinthians 5:20 (NKJV)

Jesus calls us His friends – John 15

We are part of His Royal Priesthood - 1Pet. 2

He calls us His Holy People – 1 Pet. 2

We all are a significant part of Christ's Body -- 1Cor. 12

The point, my dear friends, is that **Our Value, Our Significance is truly found in relationship with Christ.**

3. And then Paul takes it a step further: To Live Strong we must Find Our Purpose in Christ.

Our Purpose answers that Question in life: *What am I here for? What difference can I make with my life?*

Jose Marti, the renowned poet and writer who led the Cuban independence movement, once said that there are three things every person should do in his or her life -- "**plant a tree, have a son, and write a book.**"

The Jewish Talmud has it this way: "The Torah has thus taught a rule of conduct: that a man should **build a house, plant a vineyard, and then marry a wife.**"

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sotah, 44a

Either way, one's purpose in life seems pretty limited if we just do those three things.

Rick Warren in his book, "The Purpose Driven Life" suggests that we all have 5 great Purposes:

Worship – which we do here as a church family, but we can and should also do it at home or in the privacy of our room.

Fellowship – We belong to God's Family. And as a family we need to give and receive encouragement and help from each other. It is not a one-way street – always receiving and never giving.

Discipleship – Jesus called us to be His disciples and also His disciple-makers.

Ministry – God has also called us to serve others and make a difference in the life of others. In fact, in order to enhance our ministry God has given every one of us special gifts (1Cor. 12). We all have at least one gift which we should use to build others up and to build up God's kingdom as well.

Mission – God wants to use us to help others come to a Living Relationship with Jesus Christ by sharing our faith and loving others.

The reality is that in Jesus none of us is an Army of One.

If we're married, we need to surround those who are not so they may feel the warmth, the encouragement, the strength, the love of being a part of God's family.

And if we're not married, we need to come closer to others, single and married, for fellowship, for mission, for ministry, for worship, because we all disciples in need of each other as we journey together.

We are not alone.

God is with us all time, everywhere we go.

Jesus promised, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Heb. 13:5).

To you men, who are not married, I want to tell you, there's nothing wrong with you.

It's ok to want to find a partner for life and to get married.

If that happens. . . Praise God!

But if it doesn't happen. . . Praise God all the same!

Paul, unmarried Paul, made his life count for millions of people – you and me included.

He did that because he found his Identity in Christ.

He found his Significance in Christ.

He found his Purpose in Christ.

And as such, Paul, single Paul, invites us all, single or married men, to take our current life situation and to make it count for the Kingdom of God.

This is what Paul, the apostle Paul, unmarried Paul, a male after the pattern of Jesus, wrote to the Christian believers in Rome, and to you and me this morning:

“So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life — your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life — and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him.
Romans 12:1 (MSG)

Let's make a new slogan for our life from today on:

Not -- "Look Sharp, Be Sharp, go Army."

Instead -- "Be strong and courageous" (Jos. 1:7)

Not -- "Today's Army wants to join you."

Instead -- "Come, follow me! I will teach you how to catch people instead of fish." Mark 1:17 (GW)

Not -- "Be all (that) you can be."

Instead -- "He who has begun a good work in you will complete it" Phil. 1:6 (NKJV)

Not -- "An Army of One."

Instead -- "I am with you always" (Mat28:20)

Men of God, those are not just slogans, but God's promises to us.

With God, you are not an Army of One!

With God, you are stronger than Army Strong!

With God, there's nothing you cannot do for Him!

With God, you can be what your family and your church needs you to be -- Strong and Courageous!

With God, you can be the best recruiter of disciples of Jesus, a mighty fisher of men!

With God, you will Look Sharp, Be Sharp, Talk Sharp, Walk Sharp!

With God, young men will want to follow you as you lead them closer to their Savior!

With God, you can truly be All that You can be!

Men of God, Soldiers of Christ, arise!

And put your armor on,

Strong in the strength which God supplies

Thro' His eternal Son;

Strong in the Lord of hosts
And in His mighty power.
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts
Is more than conqueror.

Stand then in His great might,
With all His strength endued.
And take, to arm you for the fight,
The panoply of God.
From strength to strength go on
And wrestle, fight and pray;
Tread all the powers of darkness down
And win the well-fought day.

Men's Weekend Activity Ideas and Planning Suggestions

Written by Pastor Minner Labrador Jr.

We encourage you to get the men out of the normal meetings, away from church where men can be men and have fun together which in turn will encourage men to relate to each other in a different format than in church or church meetings.

How do I plan a men's outing?

1. Talk and brainstorm with your pastor and leading elders.
1. Select an idea or get a group of men together and ask them what they would like to do together as a group.
2. Pick a date and time for the activity.
3. Get it into the bulletin.
4. Make a list of the men in your church and personally call them and invite them to be a part of the activity. Note the ones that want to be a part so that they can personally be called again just before the event.
5. Announce the scheduled activity in church and then 2 weeks before announce it again, and then announce it the week before the scheduled time.
6. Carry through with the scheduled activity no matter how many men do or don't show up.
7. Take pictures if possible and write up a story on your event to put into the bulletin as an insert and also submit your story and pictures to NAD Men's Ministry Department for publication on the web site www.emale.org or www.adventistmen.org.

Saturday night event suggestions:

- Game night
- Pee Wee golf outing
- Movie night at one of the men's homes
- Bowling
- Fire pit gathering
- Horseshoes
- Sunday event suggestions:
- Fishing Trip
- Canoeing
- Putting contest at Pee Wee golf course
- Hiking
- Bike ride
- Golf
- Pick up game of basketball, football or baseball

- Horseback riding
- Whitewater Rafting
- Mountain Climbing
- Whatever you decide to do have FUN with the men in your church!
- Remember; “Play hard, Pray even harder.”

Next Men’s Day of Prayer is September 5, 2015