

Mr. Right

Every girl has a dream for her life and usually that includes Mr. Right. Someday, she will set eyes upon him and her life will never be the same. Like the white knight, he will come riding into her life bringing fulfillment to her heart and soul. While dating Kathy in the late 60's, she gave me a book titled, "A Man for Her". Written in the stone ages (the 50's!), the author describes the man who measures up to the male version of a perfect 10. Ideal in virtue, he sweeps his lady off her feet to take her into the sunset and live happily.....you get the drift. I looked up this book on Amazon and found my first book ever not listed. But, there are plenty of current versions of the same scenario. Mr. Right still lives in the imaginations of girls and women today. Sure, there are many selfish men but there is the "man for her" somewhere out there.

I believe that the underpinning of all romance novels is the legitimate desire created by God Himself for Mr. Right. She longs for the missing piece of her heart. But, what a tragedy it is for so many when what seemed to be her answer becomes her disillusionment. No wonder so many women have such a fatalistic attitude toward men. I can't argue too much. We are far from perfect.

I don't know how I happened to discover Kathy's dream book but I did see it again a few months ago. I was struck by its primitive look, nothing special in its humble two color cover. The print and the language was dated to say the least. But, I held it in my hands with reverence as I thought about how precious it was to my wife in her adolescent and teen age years. It was well worn. I was humbled by it because I thought to myself, "wonder how I did?" Did I even come close to making her dreams come true?

I did read the book. I read it much more attentively this time like I should have read it when she first asked me. I was convicted over and over again when I saw my selfishness. How often I had failed to be that chivalrous, sacrificial lover that she longed for. I talked with her about my feelings and she was most gracious as usual about it. We laughed and congratulated ourselves for even making it together through four decades. I must say I was determined to make the remaining years much more like those that I knew she had hoped for all along. As she put it, "I just want us to be friends". Easy to talk about, much harder to live.

"The Man for Her" reminds me so much of the Word of God. As I read about Jesus and His example, I am amazed at His resolute determination to save His bride. He has a mission that is personal. He hardly arrived in dramatic fashion as a hero at first sight. His "riches to rags" story is very disarming.

How is it that He will meet the needs of every human heart, male and female? The hymn, "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desire" comes to mind. Jesus is the Perfection for which our hearts long. Jesus is Mr. Right.

I bow before the Lord Jesus to acknowledge that only He can love my wife with the kind of love that she needs. As long as I try to be what she needs in my own strength, I am bound to fail. But, with Christ living through me as I obey Him, I have hope that I can begin to be Kathy's closest friend.

Romance novels sure have lots of appeal but may I say to the ladies, they are dangerous. Your husband or husband-to-be cannot live up to the ideal. Mr. Right, humanly speaking does not exist. If you do go into marriage with unrealistic expectations, your husband will never measure up and you will suffer. Now, I am not saying that he should not be accountable and given a license to do whatever. What I am saying is that both husband and wife can create an idol in their own minds thinking that their spouse is obligated to meet all their needs. Your marriage partner is not God. He or she is just as imperfect as you are. Failure and the need to forgive are as vital to your success as breathing. Only through the power of God will you be able to bring the ideals of heaven into your home.

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The Bible is a love story. Have you picked it up lately? Every page reveals just how important you are to God. The Bible is God's version of "The Man for Her". Unlike a romance novel that holds high appeal but delivers far less, God paints a picture across all of time that includes two people: Jesus Christ and His Bride, the church. When you get to the end, you will find that there is even a white horse!

That desire for perfection in your heart belongs to God. He made you for Himself. You cannot fill that void with anything besides Him. He allows us to try and, very often, we must come to the point where we have seemingly tried everything and the only thing left is God. That's what happened to me when our marriage after eight years was self destructing. I was mad at Kathy. She was mad at me. We were hardly living out what we thought our marriage would be. Kathy's ideal man had turned into a monster. Doug had thrown in the towel with exasperation. At the point of hopelessness, after we had tried so many ways to achieve success, someone said "why don't you try God?" Now, that was a foreign idea if ever there was one! What did God have to do with us? We agreed to go on a marriage retreat and I thought to myself, this is definitely desperation.

As we walked into the retreat center, a former Catholic seminary, I looked at banners everywhere with cute little sayings and felt uncomfortable. What have I done? I'm a captive thrown into a literal Marriage Encounter with my wife. I had such high hopes that she would see the light and get her act together. I'm sure she felt the same way toward me. She still had "The Man for Her" planted in her soul somewhere. As I began to experience the presentations from the couples and the priest, the defenses began to come down slowly but surely. From Friday night to Saturday night, what started as a flicker grew to a fire and fanned into a burning flame. That Saturday night, I knelt by my bed and confessed to God that I had sinned against my wife. I acknowledged that I did not know how to run our family as I had come to the point where divorce seemed much more likely than a friendly, loving partnership. I asked Jesus to forgive me for all of my sins and I asked Him to take over my life and lead me to be the man I knew I was not. I threw in the towel on my own ability and invited God to change me. I have never been the same since that divine appointment in November, 1977.

Yes, I have failed often since then but I know that since Jesus Christ forgave all my sins through the cross which I saw in my mind as I knelt alone in my room, I have been saved and my marriage has been saved. I understand now that both men and women are missing a relationship with Jesus Christ as long as they think they can make life work without God. "The Man for Her" is also "The Man for Him".

As I submit my life to Jesus and Kathy submits hers as well, we become joined to the Perfection that can meet our deepest needs. As I move closer to Him and she does the same, we move closer to one another. As we lead our children closer to Him, we grow closer as a family. Please understand what I am now beginning to see for the first time. The church is not a building, not a system of liturgy, not a place with hymnals and stained glass windows. Kathy and I had been attending church for more than 30 years and we were far, far from God. I now understand that the church is a relationship with Christ and it begins at home. Our little house is where God lives 24/7 because He lives in us. I have taken responsibility as the pastor of our home. Kathy stood by me as my assistant as we began to parent our children as One Flesh for the first time.

Christ came to save us one person at a time. As we accept Him into our hearts, He unites us, heals us and inspires us to become all that we were created to be. By His power that so powerfully works in us who believe, we become the man or the woman that are sometimes read about in romance novels. We should understand that only by God's power will we have the real power to be what we were created to be - the Bride of Christ. Jesus is "Mr. Right." Jesus is "The Man for You and Me."

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