

No White Knight Needed: She Wants an Average (Caring) Joe.

What can the shtick-slinging comedic candor of married TV characters teach us about women?

In all the push to become the knight in shining armor rescuing his beauty, it might be good to let our reality catch up with our fantasy. The bad news is none of us are Brad Pitt, but, apparently, the good news is that we don't have to be.

A female friend and I had an interesting conversation recently about what women really want from men. Much of what she told me was in reaction to the popular paradigm that a man should approach a woman as a rescuer. This was all good and fine, she said, but the knight-in-shining-armor caricature is more of a male fantasy than a female fantasy.

"Women don't want to be thought of as helpless," my friend began. "It's hard to say that without sounding like a feminist, because so many people think in black and white these days, but it is true.

"The knight-in-shining-armor figure is a desire for some women, but the female part of that fantasy involves the knight bringing her back to his castle where they walk and talk together, and he adores her. They have a relationship. He is gentle and fun, and he is a good communicator. These are the things women find sexy."

I think guys like the part about throwing the chick on the back of the horse, all the while fighting bad guys off with their swords, but that isn't the best part of the fantasy for

most women. My friend concluded, "If our knight in shining armor isn't good in the relationship, he might as well find somebody else."

The conversation with my friend got me thinking about this paradigm of men rescuing women. While this stereotype exists in movies, most of these movies are geared primarily toward guys. Consider our favorites: Braveheart, Gladiator and The Last of the Mohicans.

In chick flicks, you don't see the guy rescuing the girl. What you see is a relationship between two people who are pretty good at being friends, and it's the relationship that turns the girl on. Consider Sleepless in Seattle, You've Got Mail or My Big Fat Greek Wedding.

It's not that women don't find the knight in shining armor appealing, it's just that muscles, wealth and fame aren't the only things they find sexy.

If it's true that we don't have to be supermen to impress the opposite sex, then women are a lot more willing to spend time with normal guys like you and me. Consider TV shows—what sort of men do you see?

Cheryl is attracted to Jim Belushi on According to Jim, and he isn't exactly George Clooney, is he? I think Kate is quite beautiful on The Drew Carey Show, and, well, some of us are starting to look a little more like Drew every day. Debra loves Raymond on Everybody Loves Raymond, despite his meddling parents. Carrie actually finds Doug quite sexy on The King of Queens.

It seems for every George Clooney on television there are three or four, um, John Goodmans. Hope of hopes!

Now, to be fair, these men aren't considered sex symbols. But these guys have something that appeals to women. So, what do they have that we don't? I mean, we've got the extra 20 pounds

and the receding hairlines going for us. Why aren't the ladies swooning?

John Gray, author of 15 best-selling books, including *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*, often points to primitive images of man to build modern theories of relationships, going so far as to explain behavior through loitering genes from our cave-man days. Being creationists, perhaps we might find some explanation in our ancestry.

You know the story: Adam got lonely, God put Adam to sleep, then he woke up to find a woman sleeping at his side (see Gen. 2:21-23).

But wait a second, I never noticed this. The text clearly states that God had Adam name the animals before He gave Adam a wife (see Gen. 2:19-20). If there are between 10 and 100 million species on the planet, even at a pace of 50 species per day, it would have taken Adam more than 50 years to finish the project.

And the whole time he was lonely.

No wonder Adam waxed poetic when Eve came on the scene: "'Bone of my bones,'" he said, "'flesh of my flesh'" (see Gen. 2:23-25).

Ancient Hebrew poetry involved stating an idea twice, repeating it, using different language for emphasis. What the author of Genesis is capturing here is the idea that after decades of loneliness and having one-sided conversations with goats and goldfish, Adam had not considered that God might make another being such as himself. He never imagined the beauty or perfect companionship of a woman.

So, when Adam first eyed Eve, the event was among the great romantic moments in world history. Man, for the first time, saw the muse for which he would write, fight and labor until the end of time.

The chemistry must have been intense. Having worked for decades, unknowingly developing an acute appreciation for the gift that would be given to him one fateful day, Adam received a companion whom he could love fully.

I wondered, as I read, whether or not it would be sexist of me to consider that, perhaps, women are God's relational gift to men. The danger in this paradigm is obvious: that men would view women as property. But this is Satan's distortion. And in a world where one out of every six women are sexually harassed, abused or raped, the male of the species certainly has abused the gift.

I don't mean that all women are God's gift to all men, rather that a woman, one for each man, is designed in such a way to keep him from being lonely, to sustain his spirit, to invigorate his senses.

It only makes sense. After all, women are intensely relational.

As I sit in coffee shops here in Portland, I will occasionally listen in on conversations taking place next to me.

Guys talk about all sorts of things: work, sports and sports cars. Women, however, seem to talk primarily about relationships. They talk about friendships, family and fellow employees.

If my theory is correct, then it would make sense that the men whom women find most attractive would be the ones who were good at communicating.

Perhaps, not unlike Eve, your wife stands before you wondering, in so many words, "Does he think I am a good gift?" God says the answer to that question is yes. After all, He gave her to you.

According to a study conducted by John Fate and Steve Reil,

authors of the sultry book *Make Every Girl Want You*, women are attracted to another category of man, referred to as a gentleman. A gentleman, the authors say, is compassionate. He understands that a woman needs to be complimented, reassured.

As I watched TV shows “studying” for this article, I noticed some common characteristics about TV “sex symbols.”

While comically bumbling, sometimes irresponsible and often dazed, all of them were good at communicating. Each of them, at one time or another during nearly every show, expressed gratitude to their wives. They were affirming, gentle and looked her in the eye when she talked to them. They helped her relax. They put their arms around her. When you think about it, each of them made a pretty good Adam and were rewarded with a loving, faithful, encouraging Eve.

Feeling the pressure to be Brad Pitt, Mel Gibson or George Clooney can be daunting, so we should take comfort in the fact that women are looking for something much deeper. Become the Adam you were meant to be—not a knight in shining armor, but a man standing before a woman whispering, “Thank you.”

God knows we need them. God knows we don’t deserve them. “Thank you,” indeed.

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