

This Ridiculous Fantasy Has Destroyed Too Many Christian Relationships

There is a fantasy in our culture that many Christian singles have purchased, hook, line and sinker. The fantasy is that there is a special person who will unconditionally love you, meet your needs and take responsibility for your entire life. They will rescue you from the worst parts and clean up the messes you have made by personal irresponsibility. The myth is that there is a hero.

Heroes are fictional beings who have special powers and can rescue you anytime. Superman, Batgirl or any league of males and females we have read about when we were kids—certainly there's a superhero for me, right?

Sad to say, I think not. Unfortunately, like Santa Claus, so is the myth of the hero in singleness. The truth of the matter is, there are only imperfect, fallible and sometimes even mean-spirited people, even if they are saved.

These mere mortals have moods, opinions that change, grow in and out of fads, are passionate and dispassionate at the same time. They love God, and they sin. They are disciplined and lazy in different areas and can agree and disagree with you all within a day.

There are no heroes in the real world. That's not to say that there are not good people, real friends and people who are more spiritual than religious. They are just not heroes.

As a counselor, I find that people tend to need or create heroes when they are in real need. I find this especially true when it comes to someone who has put himself or herself in need of a financial miracle. Years of irresponsibility have

lead them to a large debt, and they now pray for God to send a hero to the rescue.

Needs, created out of really bad choices, create a vacuum that will either be filled by self-responsibility or a hero. My clinical experiences are that someone who's willing to be your hero, especially in romantic relationships, will usually expect something in return. Sometimes there are pure motives out there, but I can't tell you how many heroes wanted something from their weaker and in-need counterpart.

So what does all this hero stuff have to do with being single?

A lot! I have seen singles crash repeatedly by connecting with a so-called hero. These heroes rescue in the beginning and often ravish the person later on. Heroes are attracted to weak people. At a time of weakness and dependency, the unsuspecting single may give the so-called hero more credibility than a hero deserves.

Heroes may even mean well in the beginning while assisting their weaker counterpart. As time moves on, however, and the weaker person maintains dependency on the hero, the hero can begin to feel powerful over the weaker person. Once this happens, control enters the relationship.

Due to the weaker person's dependence, their discernment is limited to their need of the hero. This dynamic has often lead to romantic and sexual relationships prior to marriage.

The hero role can also be intoxicating to him as well. In whatever area he is needed, it begins to make him feel special, wanted and slightly more attractive than he might actually feel with a stronger person.

Gender is not an issue here. I have seen many women who rescue a man only to get seduced by her own heroic role and power. She marries this poor victim and complains for decades about how he won't grow up. I have seen men rescue the maiden by offering financial assistance or a place to stay and then fall

into sexual immorality and marriage.

All of us have seen the hero-type relationship. I think this is a big trap for many singles.

Tips to Avoid Needing a Hero

1. Be your own hero.

Look at your own life. What areas are you weak in? We all have weak spots. Start taking responsibility in these areas. In the hero syndrome, if your weakness is friendships, then you would look for a social hero to connect you with an “in” group as opposed to inviting others over to your place. In this case, instead of depending on a hero, simply practice asking people to do things together with you. Praise others genuinely and initiate socially to others who are around you on a daily basis.

If you were dependent on a hero, and you were romantically challenged, then you would look for someone to do most of the work in a relationship. You may have been so afraid of others that you never would assert yourself to get together with others. Get accountable to become assertive with others.

If you are spiritually challenged, then you might have looked for someone spiritually stronger than you to guide you. In a healthy relationship, discipleship is a great start. If, however you are becoming more dependent than learning the voice of the Lord, you may be relying on a hero in your life instead of actively praying and reading God’s word yourself.

2. Have accountability.

If someone is truly trying to help you, great. Bring this offered help to your spiritual leaders. As a single, it is better to have more people involved with an issue than less. Heroes often isolate a person to create dependence solely on them. This is true especially in the case of financial help.

Have all monies run through the church. This way it is the church helping you and the glazed over eyes toward a person can be minimized.

It's OK in any season of life to have a need or to need help. It is just as important to do the most you can on your own without looking for a hero. I tell my clients all the time: Become your own hero.

3. Educate yourself.

In an area of need, learn everything you can to help yourself. This can also help you assess whether the help that is being offered is truly what you need. It is easy to depend on someone with a specialized skill or information and not grow in an area yourself.

Educating yourself can be done at a local junior college, or get a few people together and let someone demonstrate their superpower by training others.

4. Don't date heroes.

Make sure the people who are helping you in an area are not people you are dating. Keep these two groups of people separate. This can keep you from romanticizing someone inappropriately.

When dating or courting, you want to choose someone, not need him or her. When your relationship is based upon dependence, it starts on an unhealthy foot. Remember, God closed up the place of flesh on Adam before He brought Eve to him. God didn't want their relationship to start in dependency, but by choice. When you are not in dependency mode when choosing someone, your intuition and discernment are sharper. When you don't need someone, but choose someone, you can hear feedback from family and friends without being defensive.

Dependency and dating are usually bad ideas for both the hero

and the weaker person. If you are courting or dating a hero currently, ask yourself seriously what is going on. What if you step back and let your help come from someone else in the church, and then you can date or court? Also, keep all romantic relationships accountable to a mentor couple to make sure your hero doesn't exploit you in some way.

Not all nice people have hidden motives, but if you follow some of these guidelines, you might save yourself some unnecessary pain. {eoa}

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