

Why More Millennials Are Saying 'I Don't' to Marriage

A new report shows that more young adults from the millennial generation are saying "I don't" to marriage, disillusioned with their parents' marriages and settling for the single life or living with a significant other.

Millennials, or those born between about 1980 and 2000 (the birth years for the generation vary among experts), are on track to have the lowest marriage rates by age 40 than any previous generation of Americans, according to a story last week on . And if the trend continues, more than 30 percent of millennial women will remain unmarried by age 40, nearly twice as many as their Generation X counterparts, the Urban Institute reported.

What does that mean for society in general? Just more single ladies and men? No, experts say. It goes much deeper than that and could have a far-reaching impact for the entire nation.

For example, as reports, married couples often fare better financially, which means they can spend more and boost the economy. Meanwhile, those who remain unmarried may be less likely to purchase homes or move into larger, more expensive homes to accommodate growing families. Likewise, single parents may be more likely to qualify for certain government social-welfare programs.

But Richard Land, president of Southern Evangelical Seminary, says that the implications of the report go far beyond finances.

"The saddest thing about these statistics concerning the decline in the marriage rate of millennials is not merely economic," Land said. "It's personal and cultural. Millennials have the lowest marriage rate in any generation in

history. This portends social, emotional and economic catastrophe for millions of millennials and their children. God told human beings that it's not good for man to be alone. Biblical revelation makes it clear that God's intention for men and women is long-term marriage as the normal and ideal relationship state.

"This is the environment in which He planned and desired for children to be raised—with a mother and a father who are married to each other," Land continued. "These marriage statistics tell us that millennials will have fewer children than any previous generation, with the social, emotional and economic consequences that accompany that fact. Additionally, children who are born to these unmarried millennials will be disproportionately reared in single-parent homes, compared to previous generations."

The Urban Institute report went on to say that the importance of marriage is on the decline for younger Americans, with more and more co-habiting and raising families without getting married. Many millennials are also waiting for an established career or financial security before saying "I do."

Land added that many millennials are avoiding marriage because of the trauma of their parents' broken marriages—an illustration of the sins of the parents being visited upon the children.

"When I look at these statistics, I can't help but think about President Obama's campaign ad that featured 'Julia,' who goes through every stage of life being assisted by the government—including having a baby—with no mention of a husband," Land said. "This is a prime example of the government taking the place of a spouse. No matter how generous it might be, the cold, sterile government is a poor substitute for a loving spouse and partner in raising children."

“We know from an avalanche of statistics that children who are reared in a two-parent home have far more beneficial outcomes as adults in virtually every arena,” he continued. “For example, children who are raised in two-parent homes have a 5 percent chance of living in poverty, but children in single-parent homes have a 35 poverty rate.

“This precipitous decline in marriage among millennials will greatly exacerbate turning America into a nation of married ‘haves’ and unmarried ‘have-nots.’ What we’ve done and are doing to our children through broken marriages and single parenthood is collective societal child abuse.”

Marriage rates among young Americans fell drastically during the economic downturn, when young adults found it difficult to secure a job. If the post-recession rate continues, just over 69 percent of women and 65 percent of men will marry before turning 40. Before the downturn, the rates were almost 77 percent and over 72 percent, respectively.