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## The Masculinist #18: Women and the Attractiveness Curve

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To: "Aaron M. Renn" <arenn@urbanophile.com>

Welcome back the Masculinist, the newsletter about the intersection of Christianity and masculinity. If you find this newsletter valuable, please forward to other Christian men you think could profit from it, because I need your help to spread the word.

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### Recapping Attractiveness in Men

In Masc #17 (a copy of which is attached) I talked about what women really find attractive in a man, as opposed to what the church tells men women find attractive. The church posits that “servant leaders” are what women find attractive. That is, women want godly men of high character who will provide for, affirm, serve, emotionally support, listen to, and validate the high worth of their women.

In fact, while some servant leader attributes such as godliness are critical to Christian women seeking a husband for a lifelong marriage, they aren’t actually attractive at all. Instead, Christian women, like women generally, are attracted to another basket of traits: power and status, confidence and charisma, physical appearance, and resources (esp. money) in a man. Low status, low confidence fat guys who are broke and living in mom’s basement will never be attractive to a woman, no matter how much time they spend praying and reading their Bibles. Men need to have both sets of characteristics, being both attractive and good marriage material. Sometimes women will compromise on this, either taking up with an attractive guy of dubious long term worth, or settling for the nice but boring guy because she doesn’t see a better option. But in neither case do those women see this as ideal.

### The Risk of Looking in the Other Direction

While I critiqued the view of some pastors like Kevin DeYoung, my goal is actually the same as his. I want to see more Christians getting married and fewer frustrated singles in the pews and elsewhere. I see marriage as normative for Christians. Yes, singleness is a valid state for Christians. But the vast bulk of people are not called to lifelong celibacy and most people will be very unhappy without a marriage and/or end up in sin as a result of extended singleness.

To do that, we have to start with the truth. We have to be willing to acknowledge the world as it actually is – something the Bible actually does very well – and be unafraid of saying and acting on those truths.

It’s relatively easy to do this when talking about men. If I say that men need to elevate their game and work hard to become a product that women want, that probably ok. Because the idea that I woman might judge a man and find him wanting is acceptable in our society.

The reverse is a very different story.

Queens Pastor Stephen Kim found this out the hard way back in 2014. He wrote an article on his blog called “10 Men Christian Women Should Not Marry.” No problem there. But then he put up one called “10 Women Christian Men Should Not Marry.” This one provoked a firestorm of controversy for Kim, including getting a mention from superstar atheist Richard Dawkins. While his site appears gone, a title search shows [43 mentions](#) for his article about men vs. [972 mentions](#) for the article about women. In follow-up Kim observed, “In one short week, my article entitled, 10 Women Christian Men Should Not Marry has gone viral and has been the topic of discussion among various blog posts, news outlets, and even sports radio stations. Last night, I was interviewed by a reporter for The Houston Chronicle who asked me why I thought there was such a high influx of negative comments for my article.”

No wonder most pastors decide discretion is the better part of valor and focus their ministry on “Man up!” lectures and tend to avoid suggesting women might want to change anything about themselves to become more marketable, or

even to explain the basics of attraction in women.

## The Consequences of Not Speaking the Truth

Unfortunately, while telling the truth about things like attraction can have bad personal consequences for the teller, not telling the whole truth can have catastrophic consequences for listeners who take those incorrect words to heart. Either they can stumble in the way they live their lives by failing to aligning themselves and their actions with the truth. Or, even worse, they could fall prey to really bad teachers when those teachers are willing to say truths that the supposed good guys won't. As Harvard professor Steven Pinker [recently said](#) about the potential consequences of failing to speak unpopular truths:

A way in which I do agree with my fellow panelist that political correctness has done an enormous amount of harm in the sliver of the population whose affiliation might be up for grabs comes from the often highly literate, highly intelligent people that gravitate to the alt-right – internet savvy, media savvy – who often are radicalized in that way – who “swallow the red pill” as the saying goes from the Matrix – when they are exposed for the first time to true statements that have never been voiced in college campuses or in the *New York Times* or in respectable media. It's almost like a bacillus to which they have no immunity, and they are immediately infected with both an outrage that these truths are unsayable, and no defense against taking them to what we might consider rather repellent conclusions.

So we have to have the courage to tell the truth about the reality of how the relationship marketplace works. Because unless we happen to be committed to lifelong celibacy, we are in that marketplace whether we think we are or not. (Whether we are single or married, every relationship today is perpetually contingent. So even those who are currently married are still exposed to the modern relationship market).

Again, we need to be clear and be careful to explicitly differentiate between three different things:

1. What is true
2. What we wish were true
3. What God says we should do

We always need to have an understanding of what is true. That doesn't necessarily mean we are always called to act in accordance with the internal logic of that truth. Occasionally we are called to go against that logic. For example, someone cuts me off in traffic. True. I want to get out of the car and go punch him at the next stoplight. Also true. However, the Bible says, “Never take your own revenge.” So I can't do that. Nevertheless, it's true that the guy cut me off and true that I had a negative emotional reaction to it. I can't pretend those things aren't true.

Sometimes we also want to change reality. For example, various social reformers believe that what is true in society is not what should be true, and they set out to make a change. But in seeking to make that change, the social reformer must be willing to acknowledge clearly the truth of the world as it presently exists, not pretend that it somehow already is what he would like it to be. Also, he has to decide how to live in the world in the interim before he is able to bring about his social reforms.

## Women and Attraction

Keeping these distinctions firmly in mind, if women are attracted to power and status, charisma and confidence, appearance, and resources (esp. money), then what are men attracted to in a woman?

Again, there are two sets of criteria. One set contains those that make a woman the kind of person a man wants to marry. The other contains those that make a woman attractive to men. For the former, instead of our “Beta Characteristics” from the men's list, we can use the “Proverbs 31” shorthand for this, after that famous passage. This would include godliness, kindness, wisdom, etc. But what drives attraction?

The answer is once again obvious if we're willing to simply admit it: physical appearance and youth are what attract men.

There are a lot of people who think that's sexist, misogynistic, etc. But again, remember that we have to separate what is true from what we think should be true, as in our social reformer example. The mere existence of a body of feminist literature promoting things like body positivity and fat acceptance, or attacking pictures of thin models or other images that are seen as putting undue pressure on women to conform to a specific kind of beauty image, or inveighing against the “male gaze” are all an implicit acknowledgment that men in fact have pretty stereotypical views of female

beauty.



*This subway ad was [banned in England](#) after feminist complaints*

It's also notable that Hollywood film actresses tend towards conventional notions of what men find attractive, as do the various models that appear on the covers of magazines, etc.

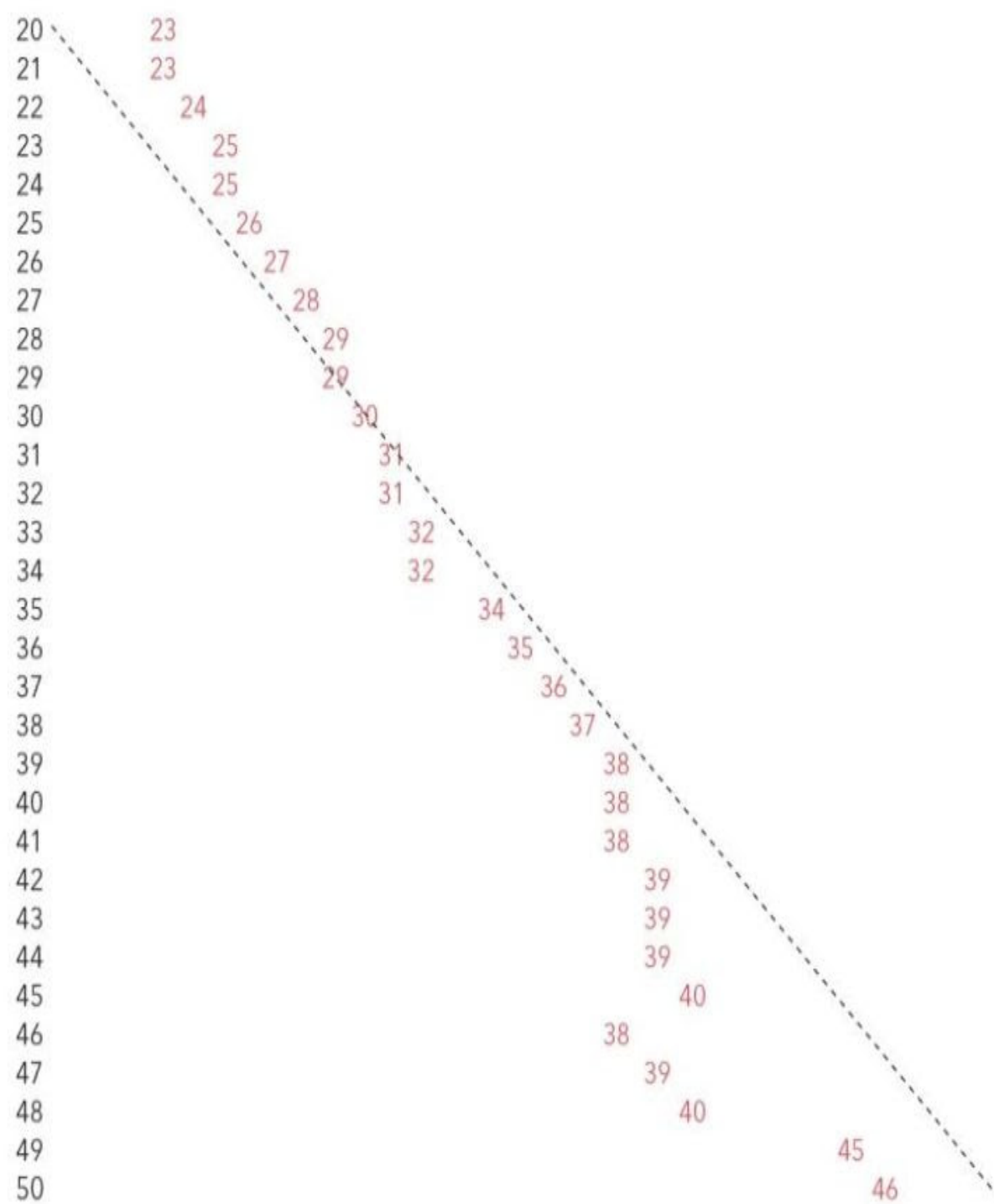
The Bible also makes it clear that physical beauty is a big part of male attraction. Rachel was more beautiful than Leah. Unsurprisingly she was the one Jacob wanted to marry, and Laban had to resort to a dirty trick to get Leah married off.

Note that the non-appearance related characteristics that drive attraction for men do not appear to have nearly the same power when the arrow is pointing the other direction. For example, in Masc #17 I highlighted a study finding that a man can raise his perceived attractiveness by two points (on a ten point scale) by increasing his salary by 10x. The [same study](#) found that for a woman to raise her attractiveness by the same two points, she'd need to increase her salary by 10,000X. [Another study](#) found that after a certain point, increasing a woman's intelligence actually made men find her less attractive.

To illustrate the profound influence of age on attraction, consider this analysis of data from the dating site OkCupid as [reported in the feminist site Jezebel](#).

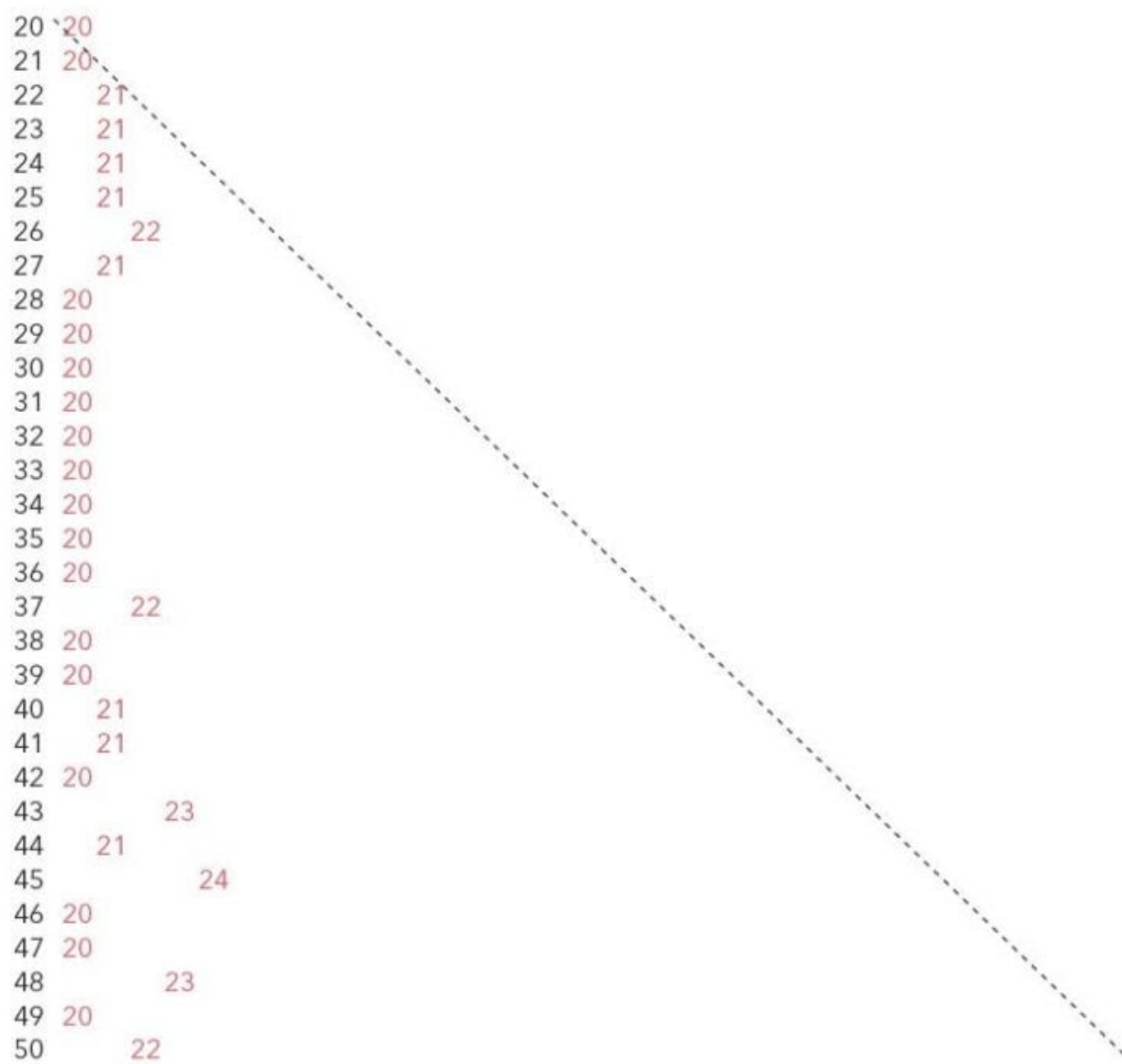
First, here's a graph of women's ages vs. the age of men that look best to them. What you can see is that the age of men that women find attractive roughly scales with their own age.

*a woman's age vs. the age of the men who look best to her*



But here is the same chart for men:

## a man's age vs. the age of the women who look best to him



No matter what their age, men think women in their early 20s look best. Here was Jezebel's commentary on this:

A woman's at her best when she's in her very early twenties. Period. And really my plot doesn't show that strongly enough. The four highest-rated female ages are 20, 21, 22, and 23 for every group of guys but one... Younger is better, and youngest is best of all, and if "over the hill" means the beginning of a person's decline, a straight woman is over the hill as soon as she's old enough to drink.

Of course, another way to put this focus on youth is that males' expectations never grow up. A 50-year-old man's idea of what's hot is roughly the same as a college kid's, at least with age as the variable under consideration—if anything, men in their twenties are *more* willing to date older women. That pocket of middling ratings in the upper right of the plot, that's your "cougar" bait, basically. Hikers just out enjoying a nice day, then bam. In a mathematical sense, a man's age and his sexual aims are independent variables: the former changes while the latter never does.

Unlike with men, where there is actively bad advice being given by the church, with women I think everyone acknowledges reality, at least implicitly. But the clear effort of both secular feminism and the church is to engage in a social reform effort that is attempting to convince (or shame) men to make a broader judgment of beauty in line with how women view men.

Women then are buffeted between how the world does function, and how many of them believe it should function. It's not an easy path to navigate.

## The Attractiveness Curve

What's missing from what the church and world are telling women are the implications of the different drivers of attraction for men and women. That's critical because the implications are of major consequence, and women have to make decisions about their own life in the reality that this social reform movement towards gender-neutral attraction characteristics has made limited progress at best to date.



The fact that men and women have different characteristics that drive attractiveness has profound implications that aren't always obvious. Most notably is that their characteristics mature at different rates.

Physical appearance tends to mature very early for both men and women. I think it's fair to say most of us were in our peak in our 20s, usually our early to mid-20s, and start to decline after 30. Once we get into our 40s, we start going downhill fast. Some of us can hang tough for a long time, but it's difficult to credit that most people are still becoming better looking after 30, though in rare cases it can happen for people who lose large amounts of weight, etc. Youth itself of course is what it is.

However, characteristics specific to male attractiveness like power, status, and money peak much later. For a lot of men, these come primarily from their jobs. Young men start out at the bottom of the totem pole at work, make entry level wages, etc. But these go up over time. In my experience the average professional guy peaks out in his career sometime between 35-45. This is when the famous mid-life crisis hits. At some point we all have to come face to face with our own limits, and realize that we won't be the CEO, the MVP, etc. And in fact a new group of young bucks might even be passing us up already. Again, there are exceptions. Tim Keller didn't become famous until his late 50s. But most of us realistically peak a lot earlier. However, unlike with physical appearance, career doesn't usually go into a permanent descent post-peak, but rather plateaus and declines gradually. (Older men who lose their job can face bleak professional circumstances at times, however).

We also start to get a sense of our mortality. As I noted in Masc #8, about age 35 is when people obtain meta-awareness of change. We become able to project our life forward through time and emotionally connect with our future selves in a stronger way that we ever could before. Since we're all on a train that's headed to the same station, death, we typically don't like what we see. This is a difficult time of life to navigate and many don't handle it well. I'm not surprised the surveys say that our 40s are our least happy decade of life.

Here's the bottom line on what this all means. For the average woman, her overall attractiveness will likely peak by her mid-20s, then start to fall for pretty much the rest of her life. For men, their looks similarly decline. But their power, status, and money start low and go up over time, which can offset or even more than offset declining looks for a while. I would say for the average guy, sometime in the early to mid-30s he hits his peak and then starts his decline, which is gradual compared to women.

When young, women are at the top of their game while men are still underdeveloped. So the average woman has much more attraction power than the average man. By the time we hit our 30s, this situation starts to reverse itself. This is the "attraction curve" and I would describe it thus in terms of rough averages:

- < 25: Strong female advantage
- 25-29: Weak female advantage
- 30: Male-female parity
- 31-35: Weak male advantage
- > 35: Strong male advantage

Again, I'm not designing the system I would prefer. I'm describing how the world works today.

I opened Masc #17 by talking about my female college friend who had previously had huge amounts of attention from men but now was getting zero dates – and was so alarmed by this that she quit drinking and started going to church. You shouldn't be surprised to hear that she was over 35.

In my experience, if someone is 35+ and single, man or woman, there's a reason – and it's almost certainly not a good one. (I was previously in that bucket myself). What's more, anyone who reaches that age and above is going to find that there are very few other people left on the market who do not have some form of baggage such as a divorce, some kind of attractiveness problem, etc. The runway to marry a high quality person without baggage is a lot shorter than we think.

But the problem becomes especially acute for women. Both men and women have declining physical attractiveness as they age, but men can buffer against that with increases in status, money, etc. In extreme cases, much older wealthy men like former Clippers owner Donald Sterling can continue to marry (or keep as a mistress) very young Thai supermodels and the like, even if no one is fooled about the reason why. But for women, they have much less to compensate with, especially in light of the fact that those social reform movements pressing men to behave differently have not yet borne that much fruit. Christian women, especially highly educated ones, have it even tougher because Christianity skews female and there are more women than men generally with college degrees these days.

I'll reprise some math from Masc #11. Imagine a 35yo single professional Christian woman in New York City or similar global city places. How many men in NYC are there who are a) age 33 or older? 2) single 3) straight 4) Christian 5) of a compatible theological/denominational background 6) of same or higher social status? Now do the math if she's age 40. That's a tiny pond to be fishing in. And that even includes men who are divorced (possibly with kids), physically unattractive, nerdy, etc. Filter those men out and you are practically looking for a unicorn.

One subtext that's often not explicitly called out in these pastors' Man Up! sermons is the age of the people in question. I see a lot of single women in churches who are 30+ or even 40+ who desperately want to be married and have children, but do not have men asking them out at all, certainly not be anyone of quality. This is not an exaggeration. There are a lot of women like my college friend who appear to be getting zero interest from men (never asked out on dates) except by the dregs of society, guys looking for a cheap score, etc.

One person who did note the age of the woman in question was the now infamous Mark Driscoll in a [Washington Post op-ed](#). He wrote, "She was smart, funny, interesting, successful, attractive, kind, in her 40s, and still single. After my wife Grace and I spent some time with the woman from our church, we could not fathom why no one had married her." Our attraction model here helps explain what happened to this woman, who, despite all of her positive qualities, is now older (notably beyond child-bearing years) and surely far less attractive than she was two decades ago.

This new reality hits women right as they gain meta-awareness of the future story arc of their life and suddenly start to emotionally connect with what it would mean to live life alone. Thus it can be a double-whammy. A woman from my church recently talked about her apprehension about what it would mean to grow old and die without any support from a husband and children. She's still got a long way to go and the door to marriage is far from closed for her, but she's thinking about things she probably didn't think about when she was younger. I can relate. I had the exact same fears when I was older and single. Honestly, once you've had them, they don't seem to go away no matter what happens in life.

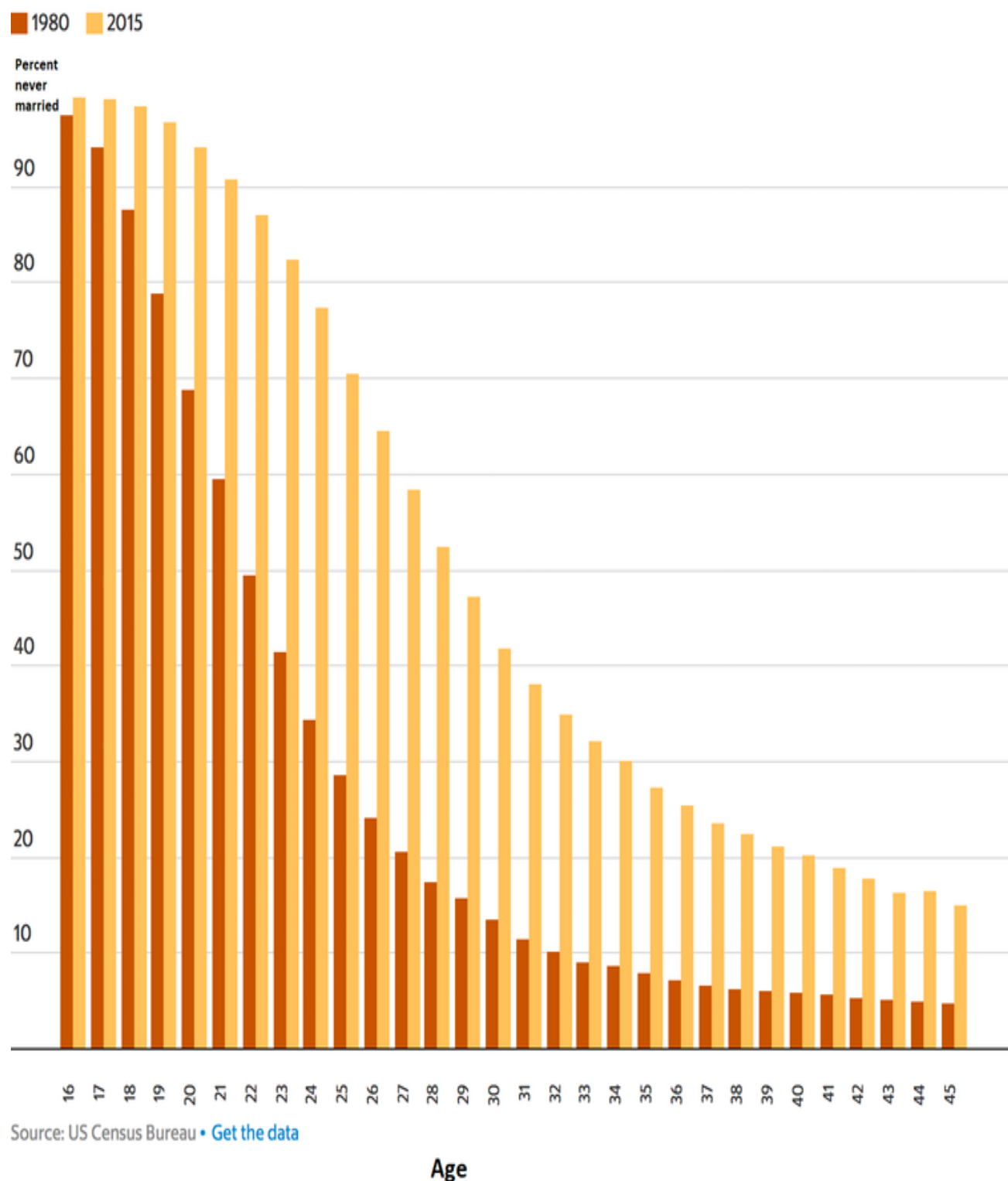
Because of the cultural line on these matters, women often don't feel free to acknowledge how personally devastating it can be to fail to marry and have children. But sometimes we do see something of it. Here's what Bethany Jenkins, a public figure in the faith and work movement who is a now 41 year old single, childless Christian woman, wrote about her situation in [a review](#) of the book *Seasons of Waiting*:

I have lamented my lot in overseeing spiritual children, not biological or adopted ones....At 39 years old, I'm still single, and it has become increasingly hard to pray for marriage. And I'm not alone. I asked my 35-year-old single friend the other day if she prays for marriage. She said no, that she has asked her friends to pray for it. For her, it's too hard to continue praying for something that God has not seen fit to withhold year after year. I understand. I struggle, too.

Before I was married I personally dated women in this age range and found it a profoundly emotionally distressing experience. The things I heard from these women about their loneliness were bone chilling. To be clear: that's not everyone, but it's common. When I moved to New York, virtually every Christian married man my age I connected with immediately wanted to fix me up with someone. Whether they will admit it publicly or not, they are very, very worried about these women.

Also to be clear, most women still end up marrying. This graph [posted to Reddit](#) went viral. It shows the percentage of never married women by age in 1980 and 2015:

## PERCENTAGE OF U.S. WOMEN WHO HAVE NEVER MARRIED, BY AGE, 1980-2015



In 2015, only 20% or so of women had not married by age 40, with another drop to 15% by age 45. Some percentage of those women surely did not want to be married, so no loss to them. But overall this is still triple the rate in 1980. And deep in mind that it doesn't include those who were previously married but got divorced without remarrying.

But all of those 40-45 year olds in 2015 were Generation X. If you look at the Millennials, say around 30, you see very pretty high percentages of never marrieds. It looks like around 42% of women age 30 in 2015 vs. only about 12% in 1980. It may well be that they will largely pair off later in their 30s, but we will have to see on that. Apparently Pew is predicting that a quarter of Millennials will never marry. And again there will be additional divorced but never remarried folks on top of that.

This landscape is a difficult one for women to navigate. I mentioned in Masc #17 that Sheryl Sandberg had written the following in her #1 bestseller *Lean In*.

When looking for a life partner, my advice to women is date all of them: the bad boys, the cool boys, the commitment-phobic boys, the crazy boys. But do not marry them. The things that make the bad boys sexy do not make them good husbands. When it comes time to settle down, find someone who wants an equal partner. Someone who thinks women should be smart, opinionated and ambitious.



Why did she write this? Her bio offers a potential clue. She married at age 24 and was divorced a year later. She married her second husband at age ~35 and by all accounts had a wonderful marriage until his recent tragic death. Did Sandberg marry the bad boy and regret it? Regardless, she got married early and it was apparently a disaster. By contrast, she was able to land a good man at age 35 for a successful marriage. No wonder she reps this model of life.

The lesson of Sheryl Sandberg is that going for early marriage comes with its own set of risks. You can often do better if you wait. But Mark Driscoll's case study, Bethany Jenkins, my college friend and many others show that you aren't guaranteed to land the plane if you try that. And, because meta-awareness of the story arc of your life, your ability to project the trajectory of your future and emotionally connect to it, doesn't set in until around 35, women often don't realize the full consequences of this for themselves until it's too late. Men face similar math, but because of the differential drivers of attraction and their ability to father children indefinitely have a much longer runway to work with. (Many men also fail to marry, however, and often face bleak circumstances, as a rule literally dying younger than those who do marry).

In short, women have much less room to maneuver than men when it comes to getting married. That may indeed be unfair, but unless and until feminist social reforms fully take hold and the biology of childbearing changes, it also is what women genuinely face.

There's no easy answer and I refuse to give women life advice because of the skin in the game principle. It's their life, not mine. They have to live with the consequences, good or bad, of their decisions, and so rightly they need to take responsibility for making them. (I'm also not invested in anyone's life failure. I hope my friend and Bethany both find the husbands they seek, and would happily celebrate if they did).

But it is critical for society, including the church, to have the courage to lay this out so that women can make informed decisions of how to live in a world that many of them would deem unfair.

I see no indication that the church has done this. Instead, what I see are pastors and other Christian leaders ranting at men about how they ought to be marrying these unhappy singles and/or change what they find attractive in a woman. (For example, see "[Real Men Love Strong Women](#)" on John Piper's Desiring God site).

In this, they are doing a huge disservice to the women as well as the men in their pews by not leveling with them about the truth and teaching what they wish were true as if it actually were true.

If they don't adjust their teachings to match reality, and find the courage to deliver some reallink on that reality to both men and women, I would not expect the singleness and unhappiness they are so frustrated with to ever materially improve.

What's even worse, when those folks in the pews do find out the truth – whether it be from hard life experience, the pick-up artist community, Jordan Peterson, etc. – they are going to be extremely angry that they've been fed lies by the church. As with other failed church teachings like purity culture and Mark Driscoll (see Masc #7), this may cause some of them to even abandon the church.

## **In the Culture: Jordan Peterson Redux**

Speaking of Jordan Peterson, I first mentioned him back in Masc #11. He's acquired a large following of mostly young men, who treat him as a sort of guru. He claims to have received 25,000 letters from young men who say he saved their lives. He's the kind of person who gets 200,000 views on [a two and a half hour lecture](#) about Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. For probably north of 100,000 of young men, Peterson has told them everything of substance they know about the Bible.

Given the poor track record of the church in reaching men, I'm always interested in people and movements that seem to be doing it. I've never been a member of the Jordan Peterson fan club, though have watched snippets of his videos. A lot of what he says is just basic stuff in my view. He's also playing the e-celeb game. Like most of those guys, the very nature of fame militates against his being around for the long haul. While he is a tenured professor and makes an extremely good living off his You Tube career, he has no institutional or tribal support from influential people, thus he's vulnerable to his very powerful enemies eventually taking him down. (The media probably have some other unstated motives for building him up, which perhaps I can talk about in the future).

What gives Peterson his power is his willingness to stand and say things that are simply not allowed by the elite cultural narrative. To violate political correctness, if you will. He draws considerable fire for his statements about

gender, for example. He will talk about, for example, how levels of different psychological traits vary between the sexes. This is well known stuff, and as a clinical psychologist, Peterson is both a bona fide expert and intimately familiar with the literature. So he's standing on solid ground. But it's ground others fear to tread. That courage, to stand up and say deeply unpopular things that are true, is what is so lacking in our world, and which I believe accounts more than anything for Peterson's following.

Here's [an interview](#) he gave recently with the UK's Channel 4. It's 30 minutes long and you should watch the whole thing to get a sense of why Peterson is a hero to these young men.



I should note that he makes several statements backing up what I've written in the two latest Masculinists. I did not use him as a source, but you can believe many young men are.

Peterson is definitely not a Christian and I have some issues with his psychology-based approach. I'm not endorsing him. But here's the thing: is there a big name Christian pastor anywhere in America who would do what Peterson did in that video? Would any of them completely reject the secular framing of the issue and stand firm on a politically incorrect answer while being deeply knowledgeable about the issue from multiple perspectives? I've never seen a Christian pastor do anything like this. This is why they are increasingly irrelevant and while You Tube gurus like Jordan Peterson are drawing in hordes of men and changing lives, even if not always in ways we would agree with.

## Noteworthy

Back in 2008, Lori Gottlieb wrote a famous controversial article in the Atlantic called "[Marry Him!](#)" in which she lays about "the case for settling for Mr. Good Enough":

My friend and I, who, in fits of self-empowerment, had conceived our babies with donor sperm because we hadn't met Mr. Right yet, surveyed the idyllic scene. "Ah, this is the dream," I said, and we nodded in silence for a minute, then burst out laughing. In some ways, I meant it: we'd both dreamed of motherhood, and here we were, picnicking in the park with our children. But it was also decidedly not the dream. The dream, like that of our mothers and their mothers from time immemorial, was to fall in love, get married, and live happily ever after. Of course, we'd be loath to admit it in this day and age, but ask any soul-baring 40-year-old single heterosexual woman what she most longs for in life, and she probably won't tell you it's a better career or a smaller waistline or a bigger apartment. Most likely, she'll say that what she really wants is a husband (and, by extension, a child).

...

Oh, I know—I'm guessing there are single 30-year-old women reading this right now who will be writing letters to the editor to say that the women I know aren't widely representative, that I've been co-opted by the cult of

the feminist backlash, and basically, that I have no idea what I'm talking about. And all I can say is, if you say you're not worried, either you're in denial or you're lying. In fact, take a good look in the mirror and try to convince yourself that you're not worried, because you'll see how silly your face looks when you're being disingenuous. Whether you acknowledge it or not, there's good reason to worry.

...

As the only single woman in my son's mommy-and-me group, I used to listen each week to a litany of unrelenting complaints about people's husbands and feel pretty good about my decision to hold out for the right guy, only to realize that these women wouldn't trade places with me for a second, no matter how dull their marriages might be or how desperately they might long for a different husband.

...

Now, though, I realize that if I don't want to be alone for the rest of my life, I'm at the age where I'll likely need to settle for someone who is settling for me. What I and many women who hold out for true love forget is that we won't always have the same appeal that we may have had in our 20s and early 30s. Having turned 40, I now have wrinkles, bags under my eyes, and hair in places I didn't know hair could grow on women. With my nonworking life consumed by thoughts of potty training and playdates, I've become a far less interesting person than the one who went on hiking adventures and performed at comedy clubs. But when I chose to have a baby on my own, the plan was that I would continue to search for true connection afterward; it certainly wasn't that I would have a baby alone only to settle later. After all, wouldn't it have been wiser to settle for a higher caliber of "not Mr. Right" while my marital value was at its peak?

You can read the article for yourself and decide if you agree with it. A couple of observations I'd make. First, there are many older Christian singles who are writers. But I haven't read any articles by Christian women in which they basically look back at their life choices and advocate that other women choose a different path. Secondly, Jewish women seem to have bigger balls than Christian men. Lori Gottlieb joins Erika Komisar and Amy Wax as Jewish writers I've highlighted who've written very direct, bold articles of the type Christian pastors don't write.

In her list of characteristics for the man to marry, Sheryl Sandberg wrote, "Someone who values fairness and expects or, even better, wants to do his share in the home. These men exist and, trust me, over time, nothing is sexier."

Reality: [a study](#) found that couples who more equally shared the housework had less sex than those following a traditional sex role distribution of labor.

Tom Keane: [Millennials, reject timely marriage at your own risk](#)

Deep Strength: [Marriage rates and end game spinster predictions](#)

John Eliot: [Want Your Daughter Single at 30? Send Her to College at 18](#) - "Student loan debt isn't just burying young people in red ink. It's reshaping the modern American family."

NYT: [American fertility is falling short of what women want](#)

As millennials slowly begin to transition toward marriage and homeownership, children may come, too. But it's unlikely any future baby boom will be able to fully offset the baby bust of the last 10 years. Many will cheer this development, pointing to overpopulation and the stress put on the environment. But very real problems could develop from lower fertility that many might not see coming, like difficulty meeting Social Security obligations, caring for older people and maintaining economic growth.

Regardless of your view, millennial women are likely to experience the largest shortfall in achieved fertility versus their stated family desires of any generation in a long time, unless something changes soon.

Kay Hymowitz: [Family-Breakdown Denialists](#)

## Coda

"For all the bizarre but now-familiar attempts to smear him as 'far-right,' Jordan Peterson is just a centrist liberal, with all the uninterestingness that that entails. But he's a centrist liberal who has been demoralized by the officialization of polite falsehood enough to loudly speak what should be insipid truths. Platitudes like 'Enlightenment values are worth preserving' and 'science is true even if when produces discomforting results' now qualify as bomb-throwing."

- Robert Mariani, "[Lying About Jordan Peterson](#)"

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