

The “no marriage proposals” canard.

Dalrock | 3 May, 2019 | by Dalrock

During the discussion of [The season of singleness](#) commenter innocentbystanderboston (IBB) made a fairly common argument, that women like Wendy Griffith and Allyson Rowe didn't delay marriage in pursuit of feminist goals, but instead were forced to pursue feminist goals in their youth because they had no [suitable marriage proposals](#):

If a medical doctor asked Wendy Griffith to marry her when she was 20, she would have said yes. So would Allyson Rowe. So would any of them. But they had no offers SO (to keep their “pride”) they bullshit us (and bullshit themselves) and make youtubes telling us about how they weren't really looking or they were trying to find themselves to be better Christians or what-not. Its all a lie. Now we can say that “prideful lie” was the result of the feminist imperative and I would agree with you Dalrock, but its still a lie. They were looking. They were just never picked by anyone that was (in their minds) worthy of them. That is the red pill truth gentlemen.

This is technically true, in a No True Scotsman sort of way. Had their favorite rockstar walked out of the TV during a music video and suddenly proposed to them, they *might* have said *yes*. And even if they said no, this would mean the man (or the moment) simply wasn't magical enough.

But while technically true, this framing misses the point. Not only does this framing overlook the woman's responsibility not to price herself out of the marriage market (if she is serious about marriage), but it also has a false embedded assumption about the very nature and context of marriage proposals. While it is true that social convention strongly states that the man should be the one to formally propose marriage, it is also true that it is foolish for a man to go around proposing to women he doesn't already *know* want to marry him. This is the reason the rejected stadium marriage proposal [hoaxes](#) are so compelling. The audience just *knows* she will say yes, because if he's asking surely she must have already made her desire to get married unmistakably clear. So when the punchline comes and she says no, the audience is aghast, every time.

Another more subtle problem with this frame is the embedded assumption that Christianity requires that men pursue women for marriage. This is another case of mistaking what we call chivalry (courtly love) for Christianity. In the courtly love model the man must boldly declare his romantic intentions and win the heart of his lady fair. Her job is to sit pretty and judge the performance, both during courtship and throughout marriage. This isn't a biblical model, but because we can't distinguish between Christianity and a [twelfth century parody](#) of Christianity we [refuse to see it](#). In her videos Rowe repeats Griffith's claim that women are a prize to be won, and she backs this up with an appeal to [Proverbs 18:22](#) (ESV):

He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord.

She offers this as irrefutable proof that the courtly love model is the biblical model. But this is an incredible stretch, especially if you weigh it against the Book of Ruth. Ruth subtly and not so subtly *pursued* Boaz for marriage, even though one might argue he is the one who formally proposed. This is true as well for Esther, the only other woman in the Bible to have a book named after her*.

Lastly, consider one more assumption nested in this frame. The assumption is that Griffith and Rowe failed because men failed. But *which* two men are responsible for Griffith's and Rowe's failure to marry in their youth? What we don't see is a movement by the most desirable prospective husbands complaining that they were never able to marry. Certainly one didn't exist 10 years ago when Rowe was in her early twenties, or 30 years ago when Griffith was in her early twenties. IBB's hypothetical

marriage minded dreamboats surely were not kept away from marriage. Desirable men who want to marry aren't becoming the male equivalent of old maids. So the perfect men IBB and so many others want to blame for Griffith and Rowe failing to marry in their youth in all likelihood succeeded in marrying. This frame blames men who succeed in marrying for the women who fail at it. This is nuts.

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*Unlike Ruth, some would argue that Esther isn't presented as a role model. I'm not convinced of this, but clearly both women were in atypical situations. However, both women clearly pursued their eventual husbands, and as a result of doing so truly wonderful things came to pass. In the case of Esther the Jews were saved from persecution. In the case of Ruth, she went from being a childless widow to the grandmother of King David, from whose lineage Christ would ultimately come.

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