

SHE'S
GOT
THE
WRONG
GUY

WHY SMART WOMEN SETTLE

DEEPAK REJU

“As a biblical counselor and a woman who didn’t marry until age forty-two, I’ve seen many of my beloved single friends make choices regarding dating and marriage they later came to regret. It’s my hope that the heartache experienced by many single women will be averted because of the wisdom Deepak offers in this book. Whether you’re a single woman or not, you’ll find this book is for you—because it’s all about being grounded in Christ.”

Amy Baker, Ministry Resource Director, Faith Church;
Counselor at Faith Biblical Counseling Ministries; author of
Picture Perfect and *Getting to the Heart of Friendships*

“Deepak has written a much-needed word to single women which is full of biblical truth and wisdom. His wealth of experience has given him the ability to write with understanding and conviction as he encourages young women to pursue Christ, patiently trust God’s plan, and depend on his grace while they wait on him. I highly recommend this book full of prudent warnings, poignant examples and godly counsel to single women.”

David and Sally Michael, Cofounder of Children Desiring God

“Dr. Reju has turned the topic of dating on its head with this insightful and thoughtful look at who not to marry. As a seasoned counselor and brother in Christ, he walks single Christian women through a methodical process of considering the dangers of settling. Using compelling case studies, Deepak carefully leads them to consider many biblical factors that are sometimes swept away as insignificant while encouraging smart women to be patient in waiting for God’s best.”

Mary K. Mohler, President’s Wife, The Southern Baptist
Theological Seminary; Director of Seminary Wives Institute

“With the wisdom that comes from hours and hours of counseling brokenhearted women, the biblical insight that springs from years in the Scriptures, and the compassion that flows out of the heart of a follower of Jesus, Deepak has written a sensitive and important book for women who want to be married and might be tempted to settle for someone . . . anyone . . . who will take away the loneliness. Sisters, if

you're considering who you should date (and ultimately marry), let me encourage you to read this book first and to take Deepak's counsel to heart. He loves the Lord and his words are true."

Elyse Fitzpatrick, Author of *Counsel from the Cross: Connecting Broken People to the Love of Jesus*

"As I read *She's Got the Wrong Guy*, I kept thinking, 'This book is like a modern-day book of Proverbs written by a father to his young adult daughter.' Pastor Deepak Reju writes with compassionate gospel-centered, proverbial wisdom relevantly applying God's truth to the vital topic of singleness, dating, and marriage. This is the book that I'll be recommending to single women."

Bob Kellemen, Founder and CEO of RPM Ministries; author of *Gospel-Centered Counseling: How to Care Like Christ*

"*She's Got the Wrong Guy* is a wonderful book. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it. It is very God-honoring, practical, engaging, and convicting. I already know several women who could benefit from this book including my five granddaughters. As a biblical counselor to women, this book is an exceptional resource. I highly recommend it."

Martha Peace, Author of *The Excellent Wife* and *Biblical Counselor*

"Deepak Reju's *She's Got the Wrong Guy* peeks into many kinds of marriage misery. He describes how and why many Christian women choose poorly. Wise single women will read and be grateful for his astute observations and ability to pinpoint why these wrong guys might seem right—and why smart Christian women should avoid them."

Susan Olasky, Senior Writer, *World Magazine*

"Page by page of *She's Got the Wrong Guy* is full of convincing and convicting truth. Shared through stories, women will find the content exceptionally relatable. The book precisely conveys what a mature view of relationship should look like and why it desperately matters. It is a book for singles and a book for those in relationship who want solid biblical guidance."

Eliza Huie, Biblical Counselor at Life Counseling Center, Marriottsville, Maryland; author of *Raising Teens in a Hyper-Sexualized World*

“Deepak Reju has given us single women an engaging book full of relatable dating dilemmas and biblical wisdom for help. He identifies common warning signs that are not typically discussed in a Christian book on dating. Whether you’re having doubts about a relationship or need encouragement to prioritize God’s standards, read this book and share it with others.”

Lilly Park, Counselor and Adjunct Professor

“This is a book that should have been written years ago. Gratefully, it’s here in time for our four daughters, and you can be sure we will be reading this biblically wise and practical treatment with all of them. Single men, too, might read it to discover the kind of man parents like us pray for daily.”

Jonathan and Shannon Leeman, Editorial director for 9Marks

“Tired of waiting for the right man to come along? Weary of delaying ‘wedded bliss?’ Are you tempted to redefine love so you can accommodate a lesser man in an okay marriage? Don’t you dare. The cosmic stakes are too high and your life is too precious to settle for a second-best marriage. If you’re looking for the emotional strength to wait well on God’s man, my friend Deepak Reju has written the perfect guide in this remarkable book you hold in your hands. I give it a big double-thumbs up!”

Joni Eareckson Tada, Joni and Friends International Disability Center

“This book is important for women who are dating, but it also for their good friends who want to help, for men who don’t want to be the wrong guy, and for anyone who loves someone who will be dating. Your pastor will be Deepak. He will speak to you like a father as you carefully consider one of life’s most consequential decisions.”

Ed and Sheri Welch, Counselor & Faculty Member CCEF; author

“There are very few books out there that deserve the ‘must-read’ status, and this is one of them. I want all of the single ladies in our church and our daughters to read this book. Deepak’s wise counsel is both urgent and timely. Applying the principles in this book will certainly spare a whole lot of people unnecessary pain and lead readers to a greater understanding of what it means to make Jesus the center of everything.”

Gloria Furman, Author of *Missional Motherhood* and *Alive in Him*

“This now, is the book I’ll be recommending for single women who long for marriage. With tough but loving truth, Deepak disciples single women with pastoral care and brotherly protection in one of the best books I’ve read regarding dating and singleness. Every single man who desires to marry should read it too, as it’s a roadmap for transformation into being a godly boyfriend and a Christ-like husband, or not.”

Ellen Mary Dykas, Women’s Ministry Director, Harvest USA;
author/editor of *Sexual Sanity for Women* and *Sex and the Single Girl*

SHE'S GOT THE WRONG GUY

Why Smart Women Settle

Deepak Reju

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PART 1:

From Problems to Faith

When it comes to dating and marriage, what problems do you face as a single woman? As you deal with these difficulties, can you learn to put your faith in Christ? We start with a simple thesis: in the midst of the contemporary challenges to dating and marriage, the greatest need for a single woman is to ground her life in Christ.

1

Same People, New Problems

Jacqueline sat on my couch, tears streaming down her face. Her latest relationship had just fallen apart. It's happened to her way too often. As a little girl, she watched Prince Charming waltz into the end of every Disney story, mesmerizing the beautiful princess, and dreamed, "One day that will be me." She was sure that one day she would be a wife and a mother. But here she was, crying over another severed relationship, and the pain was unbearable and raw.

Her dating relationships didn't last long enough to see her dreams fulfilled. The string of broken relationships hurt. She couldn't help but think,

What's wrong with me? Why wouldn't a guy pick me?

Does God care? Doesn't he know what I want?

Why does it have to hurt this much?

Am I going to be alone forever?

Am I never going to have children?

To be a single woman in the twenty-first century is challenging. Old mores about marriage and dating have fallen away. And it's all too easy to lose sight of the gospel in today's complex and confusing dating world. The pressures and pitfalls are real. Where is Jesus in the middle of this mess? Does he care? Will he remember me in my hardest, saddest, most scary moments?

Your challenges are not the same ones your parents faced. Online dating, confusion over gender and marriage, open acceptance of premarital sex and pornography—your momma and papa never encountered these problems, nor did they know how to prepare you.

Shifts in the Cultural Landscape of Dating

Consider some of the current challenges for any single, twenty-first-century woman who desires to be married:

Sex Is Everywhere

Look around you, and you'll find sex. Television and movies for sure, but it's really everywhere in our culture. Walk in any major populated area in the hot summer, and notice how people are dressed. Body parts are revealed to show almost everything. Get on your smart phone or tablet, or flip through a magazine; look at the billboards on the highway, or movie previews, and you'll find sleek women, attractively dressed, always happy, who send the not-so-subtle message, "Life is not good . . . unless you look like me."

The unspoken (and spoken) message from our culture is that to be in a dating relationship, and to make it last, a woman must have sex. "*Real* Christian men wouldn't do that to a woman," some might argue. Not true. I've counseled dozens of couples and heard an endless stream of confessions. Sexual promiscuity is everywhere, even among born-again, church-going, Jesus-loving, Bible-believing Christians.

To be sexy, to be attractive, to be alluring is the way to get a man's attention. Debbie complained to me, "When I was an overweight woman who loved the Lord, no one asked me out. When I got thin, guys started to pay attention." A woman who loves God and others just doesn't seem good enough for guys in our image-obsessed culture.¹

The availability of pornography only adds to the problems. Porn addiction is a plague, affecting men and women alike. It's not just still-life images. Chat rooms, videos, and now, even virtual porn (viewing another person on a camera in real time) are readily available. This generation has grown up with the internet, and along the way they've been dragged through the mud, fighting against the plights and pitfalls of pornography consumption. Through pornography, men's and women's hearts are shaped to satisfy their ever-present sexual impulses, and to give in to their sexual urges. What does that do to relationships? It makes men and women think about relationships primarily in terms of self-fulfillment. It promotes unrealistic expectations. It erodes servant-hearted, self-sacrificial relationships. It makes relationships much less than what God intends for them to be.

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It's Hard to Find Good Men

If we look at most churches on Sunday mornings, we will find many more women than men. A surplus of strong, godly women compared to the number of godly men means fewer choices for women and more choices for men. Men are pickier (“I want a *hot* wife”), and women often settle for less.

Where are the genuine, faithful, committed, hard-working, Christ-centered, self-sacrificing Christian men? A woman looks around her church and thinks, *All the good ones are already taken.*

Expectations for what a godly man looks like can change depending on the context. A scarcity of men can produce perilously low expectations—he listens to Christian radio, he regularly bathes, and is willing to go to church. That’s good enough, right? In other situations, there are insurmountably high expectations—a humble man (who takes responsibility for his spiritual growth and serves in the church) is looked down upon because he doesn’t have the *right* theology, or doesn’t pray the *right* way, or doesn’t know the *right* churchy language.

The Good and the Bad of Online Dating

Long gone are the days when a woman is restricted to her local church. Technology lets her have a relationship with anyone anywhere in the world. There are more options. More people. Better odds. So why not?

Worship the god of options, and you’ll be overtaken by a consumer mentality. If a woman gets fifty choices of cereal, twenty types of ice cream, ten flavors of fruity drinks, and everything available in gluten-free or regular, why can’t she get more than one choice in a man? As one young woman prayed in my office, “Give me what I want, or else, I’ll hate you, God.”

I’ve met many happily married couples who met online. Like everything else in life, if you are wise and thoughtful about how you approach it, online dating can be a great thing. But be careful of the dangers that lurk in the online world. An online persona is a very thin slice of a person’s real life. Remove the context. Get a one-sided view of the person. Happy pictures. Good résumé. Witty banter. A woman gets quickly sucked in. Hope rises. Maybe he is the one?

A lack of community engagement removes the observations a woman can make when she sees a man in his church context. Is he a flirt or servant-hearted? Does he love the Word or is he all about himself? Is he ambitious for worldly things, or for Christ and his kingdom? It’s hard to

truly know a guy because the woman only sees him in a one-on-one context, where he can put his best foot forward, and hide all the rest.

Technology Changes the Way We Do Relationships

Nowadays, guys pay attention to women (and vice versa) on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, and a whole host of social media platforms. A man and woman don't actually have to talk face-to-face to have a quasi-emotional relationship. They can talk via social media or communication apps, and not spend any tangible time in person.

There are new rules and new ways to play in the jungle. Texting is the new norm. Karen wrote me:

“A guy can text a girl coy texts like, ‘Wanna get coffee?’ and the girl is left reeling with the question, ‘Wait, did he ask me on a date, or is this just super impersonal and casual?’ It raises questions like: ‘He just liked my photo on Facebook and he doesn't like other photos from other girls—does that mean he's giving me attention and is interested?’ or ‘This guy keeps retweeting my tweets and liking my photos on Instagram—is he interested?’”

It's just too easy to hide behind a screen when having a “conversation.” A guy gets a woman to be vulnerable with long texts with deeply personal questions, and the woman is left to either take the risk or lose the guy's interest. It's a lazy man's dream—no intentionality, no commitment, and no risk. He can text, tweet, or like her pictures all he wants and never face any accountability for his actions. Nobody is overseeing a guy's online behavior, so he can drift off into cyberspace whenever he loses interest, and the girl is left reeling. She asks, “What did I do wrong?” And he doesn't even have to answer!

More Educated, Accomplished, Confident Women

The reality is that today there are more educated, accomplished, and talented women in the workforce. Women finish college and pour themselves into a career in much higher numbers than previous generations. A man meets a successful woman, and it can be intimidating for him to ask her out. Women can sense this.

This leads to difficult questions as a woman sorts through her education and career choices: How do I pay my bills, pay for my life, and do my job with excellence without hurting my chances at getting married? Will

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a certain career path limit my chances of dating? Are there certain jobs that are less threatening to men? Do I have to be an elementary education teacher to attract a Christian man? Are men scared of my intelligence, career, or salary level?

The secular world often does a better job of valuing and positively reinforcing women for their intelligence, capability, and potential. Christian women are rewarded and affirmed at their jobs, but feel like second-class citizens in the church.

Dating is *not easy*. Dating as a conservative Christian woman is *hard*. Dating as an intelligent, gifted, and self-confident Christian woman *feels impossible*.

Single Longer and Married Later

In our day, there is a growing skepticism that marriages can really last. More people are gun-shy about marriage. Statistics bear this out—the CDC reports that the US marriage rate is falling and at an all-time low.² Fewer Americans are choosing to marry at all.

For those who do marry, the trend is to get married later in life, prioritizing independence, graduate education, and careers over marriage. The average age of marriage is at an historic high—twenty-seven for women and twenty-nine for men, jumping from a 1990 average of twenty-three for women and twenty-six for men.³

The message of Western culture to singles is to wait, to enjoy your freedom, and to try living together to see if things work out. Take this skepticism about marriage, add to it that those who are marrying do it later, and you're left with more Christians who stay single much longer than their parents did.

We're swimming in uncharted seas. Single Christians wrestle with questions of faithfulness as older believers living on their own. They fight for purity much longer, not just a few years after college, but for many, a decade or two. What it means to live faithfully in singleness for a longer period of time is a question that more people are facing than ever before.

You Are Not Alone

There are even more contemporary issues in dating, many of which I don't have space to write about—confusion over sexuality, gender, and marriage, and a rising number of divorced singles and single parents. Each of these is worthy of a book on its own. The challenges that Christian

women face are not trivial; they're substantial, fraught with difficulty, and sometimes even tragedy.

If you currently feel overwhelmed by the confusing, complex, and often convoluted world of dating, please don't stop reading. You are not alone in this battle.

I've written this book because I want to help you wade knee-deep through the murky waters of the swamp and get out on the other side. The end result may not be what you had planned. One woman commented to me, "As Christian women, we teach the gospel, pray the gospel, sing the gospel—and we secretly hope for marriage."

Is marriage your paradise, your mecca, your ultimate dream?

Take a moment to examine your own heart. From the outset, it helps to be honest—as a woman, is your deepest desire for a husband, or for Christ? In a confusing world of dating, amongst the many challenges to women in the twenty-first century, *your starting point needs to be a clear dependence on Christ*. Jesus knows your challenges and your desire for a life partner, and he's not going to let you go it alone. Start with an honest heart that tells Jesus all about your struggles. Look to him for help. Jesus will help—it's a promise that's guaranteed (John 14:18).