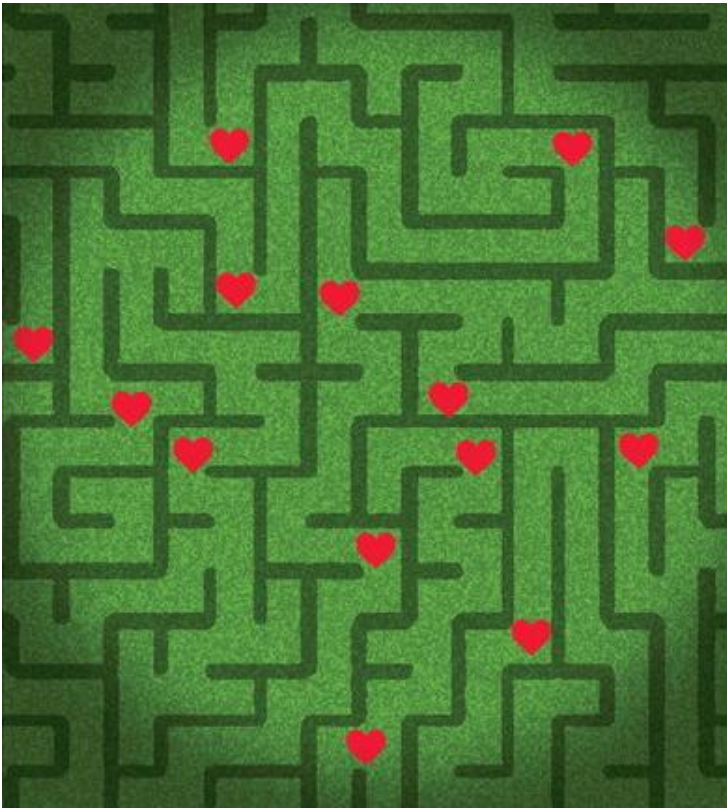


Looking for love in all the wrong places

A lack of marriages will have long-term impact on society

[Washington Times](#), By Timothy S. Goeglein, August 11, 2026



There is an old song sung by Johnny Lee titled “Looking for Love in All the Wrong Places.” The chorus goes:

Lookin’ for love in too many faces Searchin’ their eyes Lookin’ for traces of what I’m dream-ing of Hoping to find a friend and lover

I’ll bless the day I discover Another heart lookin’ for love.

In recent weeks, there has been a score of articles about the difficulties that young adults are having finding potential spouses.

In *The Atlantic*, Faith Hill writes about how she attended a “mindful singles event” in hopes of finding a connection and found it wanting. The *Wall Street Journal* published a piece on how singles are turning to Excel spreadsheets to determine whether dates went well – turning romance into a profit and loss statement rather than an emotional commitment.

A piece in the *New York Times* cited the high costs of dating are keeping young adults from going out as a barrier to getting to know someone. Another *Wall Street Journal* article looked at how singles are turning to artificial intelligence matchmakers in hopes of finding that special someone.

The problem is particularly acute in our big cities, where the lack of marriages is leading to a lack of children and the potential negative long-term ramifications for our society.

From online dating to “AI matchmakers” to “mindful singles events,” it seems that single young adults are, in Mr. Lee’s words, “looking for love in all the wrong places.”

The American Enterprise Institute (AEI) reported that 55% of singles are pessimistic about finding a committed partnership, with 57% of single men and 54% of single women pessimistic about finding someone with whom they would be happy.

So why can't single young adults find people to date? Ultimately, the evidence seems to point to the radical changes in male-female relationships that have occurred over the past several decades. The sexualization of our culture has elevated physical appearance rather than personal character as the most desired trait for both men and women in a potential marriage partner.

As a result, good men and women who would make great marriage partners find themselves rejected because they do not measure up to the culture's fixation of physical perfection or financial stability.

Coupled with cultural messages encouraging them to wait until they find the absolutely "perfect" person or "perfect" time to get married, they are left with a large population of confused, isolated and lonely young adults searching for love but having no idea what to seek or where to find it.

Finally, and perhaps most critically, as our society has become more isolated through remote work, digital media and declining civic and religious involvement, the traditional avenues to meet and bond with someone else have increasingly eroded.

Thus, while choosing to date someone (and perhaps someday marry them) is a decision that should not be made lightly or in haste, there are now so many barriers to forming a relationship that it seems like the Berlin Wall has been reconstructed — at least between young adults.

And this is where institutions such as the church must step in.

Unfortunately, many churches seem to have a blind eye when it comes to singles, sending the message that they are not welcome until they are married. A good friend of mine, who very much wanted to be married (and eventually was, in his late 30s) experienced this repeatedly.

Cut adrift from a faith community, singles end up looking elsewhere and not finding anyone — or making bad decisions based on worldly values instead of faith-driven ones.

If we are going to help young adults find love in all the right places, we need to restore and strengthen those institutions where they can make healthy lifelong connections, not just be passing ships in the tumultuous storm-driven sea of modern society.

With a little guidance and encouragement, we can help singles find these opportunities with positive ramifications for not only them, but for our society. They will no longer have to be looking for love in all the wrong places.

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