

**THE WIZARD OF OZ
MEETS THE WISDOM OF GOD**
What We Can Learn from Dorothy

I cannot take credit for the original concept of the following series, only for my thoughts on the subject. My pastor approached me one day and proceeded to give me a rundown of how single women can relate to Dorothy's trip through Oz, which left me amazed and pondering my spiritual journey as a single woman.

No Brain, No Heart, No Courage
A Lesson on Relationships

No matter which version of the story you have watched or read, the basic premise once Dorothy gets to Oz is the same. She arrives by way of a storm. Her arrival causes the death of the Wicked Witch of the East and she is lost in an unfamiliar world and desires to get home. After getting her slippers and instructions from Glenda the Good Witch, Dorothy sets off on her path to see the Wizard. We could learn a thing or two from Dorothy.

As we set out on the path of life that God has planned for us, we have the opportunity to create and maintain relationships with other people. The first friend that Dorothy met was the scarecrow. His problem...no brain. The scarecrow's limited intelligence can represent several things. For example, the scarecrow could be an easily influenced or gullible person, a person who is uneducated, or a person who knows the right path, but doesn't follow it. Notice how Dorothy doesn't try to manipulate his weakness by getting him to do what she wants. She doesn't try to force him into becoming someone that she would consider intelligent. She doesn't stop to try and teach him. She simply helps him get his footing and offers him the opportunity to walk with her to meet the Wizard.

And what about the Tin Man. He is rigid and literally heartless. He desires to have a heart, but it's just not the way he was built. Perhaps, he is someone who was not loved as a child, not nurtured, or maybe no one ever showed him affection. Maybe he's been through worse than that. Perhaps, he was abused, physically or emotionally, which caused him to shut down. Maybe he represents the person who is just plain cold. In any case, Dorothy and the Scarecrow show kindness to him by giving him oil, but they don't try to force him to express feelings. They don't shower him with affection, or try to play shrink with him. They simply help the Tin Man with his immediate problem, and tell him that he should join them on their journey to meet the Wizard.

Finally, there is the Cowardly Lion. The Lion sneaks up on the gang, trying to intimidate them. He succeeds in frightening the group, but they soon discover that his bravado is a cover for his lack of courage. The Lion has a kill-or-be-killed instinct. He has to do his best to hide his weaknesses, even if it means he will remain lonely for the rest of his life, as he scares away potential friends. He has a secret to hide and a past to protect. He does not meet the expectations that those around him have placed on him. No one understands the pressure it causes the Lion not to live up to the standards of others. Fortunately for the Lion, Dorothy and company don't judge him. They don't dwell on what he lacks. Sure, they're upset that he tried to startle them, but they soon forgive his lapse in judgment and invite him to visit the Wizard.

The original concept for this article was that single women, even those who are Christians, tend to see men with no brain, no heart, and no courage, as "fixer-uppers." Men we can mold into what we think we need them to be and then they will surely desire to marry us. Except that before we get to that point, we become more like the man rather than more like God. We may settle for a relationship without any romance. We may give in to temptation and have sex with the man before we marry him. We may end up in an abusive relationship. The bottom line is the relationship does not result in its original intention because we did not allow God to handle it. As if the God we serve is not faithful and powerful enough to provide us with a mate who is all we need and more than we can imagine.

I realized as I wrote on the subject that this idea does not apply exclusively to single women. When I think about some of my relationships with family, friends, and significant others, I know I could learn from the way Dorothy handled the situation. God places people in our lives for a reason, and those people may have issues. But notice how Dorothy did not try to change any of her new buddies. She recognized that their problems were too big for her to solve and allowed them to join her as she sought help. She didn't stop and sulk with them over their problems. She did what she could do to encourage and mobilize them to walk with her. She knew they had weaknesses, but she chose to guide them to a place where they could get help, rather than leave them on the side of the road. We need to do the same. We need not ignore or pass judgment on other people's tribulations. We should encourage them and mobilize them to press toward God, to find their own path to righteousness.

We never know the changes that can be experienced by other people by simply allowing them to walk along with us and watch us let God be God. That person could be meant to be someone special for us, or not, but what matters most is that God's work is done. If Dorothy had not invited the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Lion on her expedition, they would not have discovered that all they needed was already within them. When you're on your yellow brick road in life, are you helping or hindering others' relationships with God? Are you forsaking your path for the sake of relationships or facilitating the discovery of a righteous path for your friends? Are you exemplifying faith that will not fail to those around you or are you exhibiting fear that will make you fall? We could all take a lesson from Dorothy about relationships.