In Genesis, God makes man and then declares "It's not good for man to be alone". Now what's God on about? If man needs cuddles there are puppy's, if he needs a race/sporting competition then there are cheetahs, if he needs financial security then there are oysters. Now all those are good reasons why it can be nice not to be ~~be~~ alone, but when God makes women, none of those can be the primary reason. Clearly there is something deeper to this alone-ness, that cannot be satisfied elsewhere, there is something special about "woman".

At this point I think, ok so what's the big difference? And firstly and most obvious, Eve has a much higher emotional and mental ability to relate to Adam (but then again Dogs apparently feel our emotions, and dolphins are pretty clever), so I believe that the primary and biggest difference then is that Eve is also a spiritually capable person. Humans uniquely (among god's creation on earth) have the ability to relate to their creator. God breaths into the women the breath of life.

But hang on, surely Adams need for spiritual relation would be completely and overwhelming satisfied as he already gets to walk around the garden WITH GOD himself!!! So here we have man, living in paradise, surrounded by all the "good" that God had made, and getting to walk around personally with God himself, and yet still God sees that in some ways man is alone, and that is not good.

To my mind therefore, what is the purpose of such a relationship between a man and a woman? Well I think it must be for each to point each other to God. To walk together with God. God saw it fit to give Adam an "Ezer" a strong helper. If Eve is described as a helper, that begets the question "what is she to help with?", And I'd argue the answer is to help "with living life". And what does it mean to live life? What is she supposed ~~the~~ to be helping Adam to do? Well the chief end of man is to glorify God ~~me~~ to enjoy him forever. So that's why I believe that the chief aim of a relationship is to help one another to live life in this way.

Is this maybe not why Christ is pictured to "marry" the church, so that his bride can glorify God and enjoy him forever in heaven? (Or maybe marriage is given to man and woman because it is a shadow of what Christ will do. Not sure exactly which way around it is)

So with this in mind, I'd say that a relationship should be two people asking the question "Is this going to lead to a marriage where we can help each other glorify God forever?" If the answer is yes, and you've both helped each other to grow in knowledge and love of God along the way, then fantastic, a success. If the answer turns out to be no, but you've helped each other to grow in Godliness along the way, then that's also a successful outcome.

A note about singleness as well. If we say that woman was created to help man by pointing him to God in marriage, and that is still the purpose of marriage, then what do we say to unmarried people? That a single woman must find a husband in order to fulfil her creation purpose? That an unmarried guy is not being pointed to Christ as much as he should? Of course not. 1 Cor. 7 tells us that single people can be dedicated all the more to the service of the Lord, to fulfilling the great commission, to fulfilling the cultural mandate; within the family of the church. If we say that woman in marriage is a suitable helper for the cultural mandate, we can see how it is refocused with Jesus and the great commission, and how unmarried people fit into it. If we say woman is to help by pointing her husband to God, what do we say to single people?