

Tuesday Truth for Youth: Love, to Feel Loved

Holidays bring that cuddly,
snuggly warm feeling of
togetherness, even for teens.

So here we are again, another holiday season is upon us. And you know what that means: Pressure!

Pressure to get together!

Historically, the holidays have been a time when people spend more time with their family and friends, but over my more than 25 years of experience working with teenagers, I've noticed that around this time of the year, a lot of them tend to want to begin dating.

Now, my perspective on teenagers dating is fairly simple and straightforward: it's *always* a horrible idea!

The reality is that teenagers' brains aren't done cooking (and they won't be done until their mid-twenties); they don't know who they are or what they'll become. They're still trying to figure it all out. However, I know that, for the vast majority of teenagers, my words will fall on deaf ears, so, as much as I don't want to, I need to address this issue.

Feeling the Pressure

Anyone who is in any sort of romantic relationship begins to hyperventilate, sweat profusely, experience dizziness, and feel compelled to spend large amounts of money to purchase gifts and/or spend time with their significant

other or their family. Needless to say, if you are single, or in a romantically-undefined relationship, you feel as though you were somehow excluded from all the celebrations, and tend to feel a lot of unnecessary and illogical pressure to date someone.

Cuffing? Yeah, It's Really a Thing

Stop laughing—this is a real thing! WebMD's doctor Smitha Bandari, writes about this phenomenon, called "cuffing". While the term sounds lighthearted and fun, the drive to get cuffed is based on a deep, natural human need because, at least in the Northern hemisphere, it's cold and dark, and it can feel very lonely; and there's this pull to connect with other humans, which is often subconscious. The fact is that we were all made for connection and for love and during the holidays, we tend to crave it, see it, or miss it, more than at other times of the year.



Love to Feel
Loved

Now, what the folks at WebMD won't be able to tell you about how humans are made, is that God made us all to *love to feel loved*. God made us all to be social creatures and to long for relationships. After all, God, is, by His very nature, a social being. "Then God said, 'Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us' " (Genesis 1:26a, NLT).

So the phenomenon of dating and relationships and marriage—or “cuffing” for that matter, shouldn’t surprise us one bit.

However, frankly, too many people get stressed about being someone’s “Someone” during the holidays. The fact is that we should all strive to show each other we love and cherish each other every day.

The Affection Equation

To that end, a TED talk titled “The Mathematics of Love”, in which Hannah Fry, the presenter and author of the book *The Mathematics of Love: Patterns, Proofs, and the Search for the Ultimate Equation* noted that in our society and culture, people are obsessed, fearful, and anxious about finding someone to marry. But not just anyone, the right one—nay, the perfect one!

Unfortunately, I’m not making this up. Fry went on to note that she has created an equation/algorithm that, if applied properly, can solve the problem of those in search of life-long love characterized by ponies, glitter, and rainbows.

No Perfect People

But this is a fallacy, because the Bible says there are no perfect people, so how can there be perfect matches? The apostle Paul bluntly reminds us: “All of us have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory” (Romans 3:23, CEV).

I don’t mean to burst your bubble, but if you’re holding out for Mr. or Miss Perfect, you’ll be waiting for the rest of, well, eternity. My advice, and the advice of every marriage and family therapist I know, is simply this: instead of trying to find the perfect person, become the perfect person. How do we do that?

Jesus is “Mr. Perfect”

Well, it simply begins with a recognition that we are imperfect people—we’re all sinners! And as sinners, we need to accept the offer of a lifelong relationship with the only, and the original Mr. Perfect, Jesus.

“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16, NLT).

Once we do that His Holy Spirit begins the process of working in and through us “Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the

power to do what pleases him” (Philippians 2:12, 13, NLT), helping us become that person accepted by God as perfect. Once begun, that process always ends in success

“And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns” (Philippians 1:6, NLT).

So whether you’re happily unattached, or single and searching, remember: all you really need this new holiday aka “cuffing” season—and every day—is Jesus!