

Cuffing SZN - Keep it 100

Key Text: 1 Peter 3:7

Big Idea: The greatest sign of a healthy relationship is when both people are asking, “What can I do to honor you?”

Intro:

Today we’re continuing our series called Cuffing Szn, and talking about how we can “Keep It 100” in dating relationships.

Most students (and most people) would say the goal of dating is to see if you like somebody. That got me thinking ... if the goal of dating is to see if you like somebody, then the goal of dating is similar to the goal of going to a store just to try on clothes.

For example, you see a shirt, you like the shirt, you want the shirt—but first, you want to “try it on” to see if it’s a good match for you. Now, from this point, there are two different ways to go about the “trying it on” process that also symbolizes dating.

1. You are really careful with the shirt because you know it’s not yours.

You try on the shirt, understanding full well that you have not yet purchased the shirt. You carefully try on the shirt, leaving all tags and stickers in their place, fold up the shirt when finished, and leave it with the store as good as new.

OR...

2. You do whatever you want to the shirt, acting as if you own it.

You try on the shirt and quickly rip its tags out (and go brag to your friends about how little of time it took you to do it). You wrinkle and wad the shirt. You walk out of the store (without purchasing the shirt), head over to the food court, eat lunch, and get gunk all over the shirt. You then return to the store and give back your permanently stained and marked-up shirt to the store (whom you never actually purchased the shirt from). You then go grab another shirt to begin the process all over again! After all, there are a lot of shirts in the store, and there is no need to be concerned with how they are treated; each one is just a commodity.

Unfortunately, we can often view the people we date as commodities. We view a person as a commodity when we view them as something there are a lot of (“there are a lot of fish in the pond!”) and very little uniqueness about.

Today, I want to talk about a word that can completely change your relationships. The word is honor.

Honoring the person we're with means we recognize that someone worthy of being treated with respect. We recognize that the person we're with is not just another “shirt on a rack,” but someone of incredible worth!

Value people like God values people

When a person strives to follow Jesus, it changes every part of the person's life! This does not happen overnight. As we grow in our relationship with God our life changes, and this includes dating.

For many of us, dating is a huge part of our lives! And those of us who are followers of Jesus should date differently than those who don't have a relationship with Jesus.

Jesus teaches us that every single person is unique and has value!

- Every single person is a person whom Jesus died on the cross for.
- Every person is a person who Jesus created and valued so highly, that He was willing to be tortured and murdered for their benefit.
- Followers of Jesus become a son or daughter of God!

A person's value doesn't come from whether or not they think or feel like they have value, but instead, a person's value comes directly from God. As a follower of Jesus, to see that the person we're dating has value is not suggested, but expected by God. So this is why we honor one another in all relationships, including dating!

The person you're dating (or interested in dating) is either:

- a son or daughter of God
- a person who God wants nothing more than for he or she to become His child.

We honor people when we value people like God values people.

Jesus saw value in all people

One of the many things that was unique about Jesus was the value that He gave to people—all people. He went out of His way to honor the people that culture dishonored: women, the sick, the irreligious, and the poor. Jesus saw intrinsic value in each person, and it showed in His behavior!

1 Peter 3:7 pg. 589

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

Two things to notice about this verse:

- **Girls**

- some of you may have had a difficult time reading the whole passage because you saw the line “woman as the weaker vessel” But this line actually demonstrates the unique value that Jesus brought to women in a culture that had little value for women!
- Jesus was born into a culture where women were often treated very poorly, yet Jesus went out of His way to show honor to women. He brought a new value system, believing that both men and women are children of God.
- Peter calls on men to also honor women, and to not use their physical strength as an abuse of power. Instead, as Jesus did, men are to use their strength to honor, serve, and protect women as equal heirs and children of God.

- **Guys**

- Did you see the last line of this verse? God cares about how you treat your girlfriend.
- We often compartmentalize our lives, and view God as one area of our life and girls as other area. All areas of our lives are fueled by our hearts, and God cares about nothing more than our hearts.

No matter how you appear at church or in front of your friends, God does care about how you treat your boyfriend or girlfriend.

As a result of God’s value for all people, honor is expected rather than suggested. The greatest sign of a healthy relationship is when both people are asking, “What can I do to honor you?”

Dating with Honor

1. Date with Purpose

Plenty of people date for the wrong reasons

- to make someone jealous or angry
- To increase popularity or fit in
- physical attraction, etc.

Date someone whose character and personality you’re drawn to, and who is genuinely interested in seeing if the relationship progresses.

When/if the moment comes when you have a difficult time envisioning your relationship down the road, or the idea of a long-term commitment of marriage seems unattractive to you, then it’s probably time to end the relationship!

Don’t date someone just to date someone or fall into dating someone for the wrong reasons. You gain nothing, and it does not honor the other person. Honor the other person, be honest, and don’t waste their emotions or time.

2. Establish Physical Boundaries

Everyone makes mistakes. God offers forgiveness and grace when we repent. Yet, it is so much easier to move on from a relationship when you don't feel like you gave too much of yourself away. Remember, you are dating a person who is either 1) a child of God or 2) a person who God wants nothing more than for him/her to become His child.

When we value people like God values people, it changes how we treat them, including our physical boundaries in dating. Are we supporting God's work in the person's life ,or are we hijacking God's mission for the sake of our personal hormonal drive?

There is a direct connection between your physical boundaries and your level of value for the person you're dating. Often, tighter boundaries equal higher value. This can be a harsh and frustrating reality, but it's true and worth fighting for!

3. Find Accountability

Don't be the couple that functions in isolation. You need someone you can go to for advice and coaching. Your source of accountability should be someone you can trust with sensitive parts of your life.

When you hear the word "accountability," many of you might think about your group of friends that currently provide you with advice and insight.

When it comes to finding accountability, don't go with the first, second that comes to your mind. Go with the person who makes you a little nervous because you know they are going to push you and aren't afraid to call you out when its appropriate.

If you want to have a healthy relationship and date in an honorable way, then you need to have strong accountability and coaching in your life. You need to find accountability.

4. Look for someone looking to become someone

The following illustration is meant to highlight the importance of each person seeking to become someone and run their own race rather than find his/her identity or mission in another person. (Remember our lesson last week?...)

Dating is like running a marathon. As you run, you have your form, strategy, goals, and eyes on the finish line. As you run, you recognize someone is next to you running their own race, with their own form, strategy, goals, and eyes on the finish line. You ask the person, “Hey, you want to run this race together?”

Each person runs their own race, and then has the option to run their own race together. Nobody piggybacks on the other person. Nobody says, “I can’t imagine running this race without you,” or, “I don’t know what I’ll do if you don’t run this race with me.”

Instead, both runners run their own race. If the two runners are a great match for each other, then they’ll cross the finish line in celebration! If the runners are not a good match, then both will continue to run their race as individuals.

The best dating relationships are made up of two people committed to each running their own race the best they can. After committing to your own race, you look around and see who is keeping up with you. These are the people who are easier to show honor to, are more likely to show honor to you, and more compatible to the God honoring relationship you are after.

Conclusion:

The best way to “keep it 100” in your relationship—to have a healthy relationship and minimize regret—is to focus on running your own race. The most attractive thing you can do in the eyes of a person fixated on becoming someone is to be focused on becoming someone yourself!

When you find the person that you want run with, constantly ask the question, “What can I do to honor you?” You never know how long you’ll run with him or her. Seek to exemplify the value of God by asking, “What can I do to honor you?” When both people in a relationship are constantly asking this question, what a healthy and meaningful relationship it can be, regardless of the length of that relationship.

Small Group Questions

- In what ways do you see people view their boyfriends/girlfriends as commodities?
- How have you seen people date to satisfy selfish desires and ambitions?
- Each person you date (or have dated) is either 1) a son or daughter of God or 2) a person who God wants nothing more than for him/her to become His child. How might this truth change your dating behavior?
- Read 1 Peter 3:7. How do the principles of honor within marriage, communicated in this verse, translate to the principles of honor in dating? How does this look?
- What relationships (e.g., parents, friends, family, etc.) have you seen in which both people are seeking to honor the honor person?
 - What about their relationship makes you think of them?
- What relationships have you seen where it looks like neither people, or only one person, is asking this question?
 - How does that relationship compare to the relationships that do show honor to each other?
- Of the four practical ways we can honor one another in a dating relationship (date with purpose, establish physical boundaries, find accountability, and look for someone looking to become someone), which one do you struggle with the most?