

(500) Days of Summer

Fox Searchlight | Starring Zooey Deschanel, Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Geoffrey Arend, Matthew Gray Gubler, Chloe Moretz | Rated PG-13

Tom Hansen is a boy. Summer Finn is a girl. The movie tagline says it all: *Boy meets girl. Boy falls in love. Girl doesn't.*

Many of us can relate. Tom (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) believes in true love and thinks he's found it in Summer (Zooey Deschanel). But her past has left her jaded, and she is put off by his expected relational declaring and defining. She wants nothing to do with a so-called committed relationship and has all but abandoned the idea of traditional marriage. Still, she acts in a way that's heard of more often among guys (not all, I know) involved in these "nonrelationships": They say they're only friends and don't want commitment, but their actions indicate the opposite.

Tom and Summer get along splendidly. They date, hang out, talk, smile, hold hands, kiss and (unfortunately) do more than that. But when Tom voices his need for clarification, Summer balks and doesn't want things to change.

Confusion.

He is left to either hold on or walk away. He can't let go so he goes on ... hoping. Eventually she finds love—with someone else. And yet because she still sends Tom a mixed message, he's left in limbo.

It might not seem like it from my description so far, but *(500) Days of Summer* is endearing. Even though we're warned in the voiceover that this is not a love story, it certainly captures the charm of one. The title, with its play on words, is brilliant. The storyline is intriguing (though it has its heartbreaking moments). The storytelling is sublime, clever,

cute, fun and remarkable. The cinematography is artistic, beautiful ... and yes, clever, fun and remarkable (I know I'm repeating myself). Despite all this heaping praise, I can't recommend this movie.

Confusion.

I know. Believe me, I wish I could (see dripping adoration above). But I just can't in good conscience. The worldview, the sexual innuendos, the homosexual references, the language, the immorality—it's all too glaring and ungodly to justify watching the creative genius that is displayed onscreen.

So why even mention this film? Because I know teenagers (and adults, of course) will want to see this movie, and I want moviegoers—especially parents of teen moviegoers—to know what they're in for. I know not everyone will heed my warning to avoid it, but at least they can be prepared.

Because the values and beliefs are wrapped up in such a charming package, many people—believers and nonbelievers alike—will soak up the ideas onscreen, forgetting to reject all that doesn't line up with God's standard. And the unfortunate truth is that most, if not all, of this film simply doesn't.