

Young Singles Have Schizophrenic View of Love, Says Megachurch Pastor

John Mark Comer, lead pastor of Bridgetown: A Jesus Church in Portland, Ore., a city with one of the highest percentages of religiously unaffiliated adults in the nation, will release *Loveology* this coming February.

Bridgetown, which is part of a family of churches formally known as Solid Rock, is unique in that about half of the 6,000-member church is made up of educated, unmarried college students and 20-somethings. Having experienced challenges in his own dating life and even marriage, Comer is passionate about answering the young generation's questions about relationships with raw, uncut and honest answers in *Loveology*, which releases Feb. 4.

Two years ago, Bridgetown hosted its "Loveology" event, where 2,000 college-aged adults attended a two-night, in-depth teaching series on the theology of love, marriage, sex, romance and singleness. Each night ended with two hours of live, uncensored, anything-goes questions and answers led by Comer and a colleague.

The "Loveology" podcast taken from the event continues to rank in the top three downloaded teachings on the Bridgetown website. Two years after the event, young adults are requesting another "Loveology" event and continue to approach the church with questions about their relationships.

"Young, amorous singles who love and follow Jesus are inundated with a schizophrenic view of love," Comer explains. "The message of culture and the message of the church are at odds, and it can feel like a maze trying to navigate the two."

“We’re a generation with questions: What is marriage? In a time where 50 percent of marriages implode within a few years, why take the risk? If sex is so wonderful, why should we wait for it?”

“More than ever, the church can’t stay silent. The Scriptures have so much to say about marriage and sex. We have to join with the biblical authors and talk about relationships in an honest, open and truthful way.”

In a world where love and romance are the main ingredients in many films and television shows, often these plot lines create an incorrect portrayal of real-life relationships. We may see the main characters riding off into the sunset, kissing in their happily ever after or perhaps even walking down the aisle toward marital bliss. No matter the conclusion, we are given the message that love is easy and always full of affection.

Many have fallen for this Hollywood fairy tale, pushing aside morals to pursue a happily ever after. Forty-eight percent of women between the ages of 15 and 44 move in with a partner before getting married in an effort to fortify their relationship. While one would assume these couples soon make it to the altar, many never do, deciding to cohabitate rather than face the specter of divorce. With 50 percent of marriages ending in divorce, too many have seen the dream of perfect matrimony fail. Obviously, something isn’t working.

Since the ultimate goal for Christian couples is marriage, Comer begins *Loveology* there, with a discussion about what marriage should and shouldn’t be, based on the Genesis account of God’s creation of marriage and sex. Then he works backward through all the steps along the way—relationships, love, sex, romance, singleness and masculinity and femininity.

Comer helps readers understand how to successfully complete the journey from young adulthood—first embracing one’s own

sexuality and being content with singleness to finding love
that leads to the altar.