Public Displays of Affection: How Much is Too Much?

* **Kris Swiatocho, Cliff Young**
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* COMMENTS **6**

***EDITOR'S NOTE:***[***He Said-She Said***](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/singles/he-said-she-said/) *is a biweekly advice column for singles featuring a question from a Crosswalk.com reader with responses from a male and female point of view. If you've got a question about anything related to singleness or living the single life, please submit it to* ***hesaid-shesaid@crosswalk.com*** *(selected questions will be posted anonymously).*

**QUESTION**: What are your thoughts on PDA (Public Displays of Affection)? How much is ok? Should I confront a friend about it if I feel she’s crossed a line with her boyfriend, or is it none of my business?

**HE SAID:**

The [**Bible**](http://www.biblestudytools.com/) addresses many issues in clear-cut no ambiguity “black and white” ways. Public display of affection is not one of them.

We can debate either side referencing passages to support “our” point of view.

One could argue, “It is good not to do anything that causes your brother to stumble” ([**Romans 14:21**](http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?t=niv&q=ro+14:21-21)) is a clear admonition against anyone doing anything which could possibly lead, encourage or justify someone into sin. Seeing or participating in a public display of affection could certainly be cited as the catalyst which encourages a person to stray.

On the other hand, the words of [**Song of Solomon**](http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?t=niv&q=so+1:1-17) leave little doubt the couple was very affectionate towards one another and leads me to believe they were probably not shy in showing it even when they were in public.

In his infinite love and wisdom, God gives us his Word to live by, but allows each to make the choice to interpret, decide how to apply and whether or not to follow it (in our *own* lives).

In contemplating your question, a number of thoughts came to mind.

How close of a friend is she? Is it uncomfortable for you to be around them? How does it make YOU feel when you see her showing affection in public? What is the “line” you think she crossed and who drew it?

Generally, really close friends shouldn’t have to ask an outsider whether or not to address an issue with each other so it makes me think there is some underlying issue.

My concern is you are feeling a little uneasy or even envious of your friend, which can be expected under the circumstances. However, as a result, you are looking for them to change their behavior.

I may be way off base in your situation, but sometimes when we see others engaging in activities which we envision (and wish) for ourselves, feelings of resentment rise up and cause us to make unreasonable requests or demands (or even try to deem their actions wrong).

I’ve seen a lot of PDA over the years and can’t recall any I have felt was totally inappropriate (although excessive affection on public transportation, at work or in confined areas is definitely ill-advised).

I actually appreciate seeing couples of all ages, especially elderly ones, who aren’t afraid to show their affection towards one another in public by holding hands or cuddling with one another (we would probably have a lot less problems in the world if we did).

As for a definitive “line” being drawn, I doubt if a body of believers could mutually agree upon one, let alone try to enforce it.

I’d leave it alone for the good of your friendship.

**SHE SAID:**

Love is in the air, although sometimes when you see two people walking along, holding hands, cuddling a bit, or giving the occasional starry-eyed glance -*wham*, here comes a huge, drooling kiss that not only goes on forever but comes with hands that seem to be checking for weapons!

So is it wrong to kiss someone in public to show that you are in love? I say no, as long as you are in *love* and not *lust*. As long as you have respect for yourself and the other person. Short kisses, hand-holding, and hugs are perfectly normal and keep love alive in us all. It's when those things take on the appearance of a sexual nature that they become dangerous. Are you being aggressive? Showing off? Self-focused? Ultimately, as a Christian, your goal should be to live a life worthy of HIS calling. Your behavior, just like what you say and how you live, is an example of Christ. So ask yourself when you are out and about with your special person, how does my behavior with this personal glorify God, how does it help people to grow towards Christ? Would someone get a bad idea of my relationship with this person, meaning, would it appear we are having sex? What would I want those coming along beside or behind me learn?

You also asked whether you should confront your friend. If it's someone you are very close with, then by all means, says something for the reasons I listed above. Now, your friend's relationship with God will affect their answer. As we all draw closer to God, our sin will be come more and more evident including how we behave in public. I would also encourage you to spend more time with your friend by starting a Bible study, praying with them, etc. This way, you can grow together in your walk with the Lord.

*As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received* ([**Ephesians 4:1**](http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?t=niv&q=eph+4:1-1)).

***SHE is ...******Kris Swiatocho****, the President and Director of* [***TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries***](http://thesinglesnetwork.org/) *and* [***FromHisHands.com Ministries.***](http://fromhishands.com/) *Kris has served in ministry in various capacities for the last 25 years. An accomplished trainer and mentor, Kris has a heart to reach and grow leaders so they will in turn reach and grow others. She is also the author of* [***three books.***](http://www.thesinglesnetwork.org/bookspdfs.html)

***DISCLAIMER****: We are not trained psychologists or licensed professionals. We're just average folk who understand what it's like to live the solo life in the twenty-first century. We believe that the Bible is our go-to guide for answers to all of life's questions, and it's where we'll go for guidance when responding to your questions. Also, it's important to note that we write our answers separately.*

***GOT A QUESTION?*** *If you've got a question about anything related to singleness or living the single life, please submit it to* ***hesaid-shesaid@crosswalk.com*** *(selected questions will be posted anonymously). While we are unable to answer every inquiry, we do hope that this column will be an encouragement to you. Click here to visit the He Said-She Said* [***archives***](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/singles/he-said-she-said/)