

*The purpose of the first paragraph is to reveal stats and quotes from mainstream sources about the growing struggles teens may have regarding each topic. The purpose of the second paragraph is to reveal God's perspective by seeing what the Bible says regarding each topic and how we can receive help and guidance in our life's purpose through a relationship with Jesus.*

## SOCIAL MEDIA

On average, 76% of teens use social media<sup>52</sup> on 5 different accounts for 116 minutes a day<sup>56</sup>. Almost 50% of the world population uses it<sup>56</sup>. Platforms include Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat and more. It's often described as more addictive than cigarettes & alcohol<sup>40</sup>. 81% of teens feel social media has a positive effect on their lives<sup>56</sup>. With great benefits of connection for businesses and people, many dangers of our use of it include loneliness<sup>58</sup>, anxiety, depression, predatorial activity, unrealistic expectations, poor sleep<sup>40</sup>, stress, isolation<sup>41</sup>, jealousy<sup>60</sup> and decline in mental<sup>40</sup> & physical<sup>61</sup> health, self-esteem<sup>41</sup>, happiness<sup>60</sup> and face-to-face interaction<sup>61</sup>.

The Bible says what we feed our eyes feeds our souls (Matt. 6:22-23) and it supports face-to-face connection (2 John 12, Heb. 10:25). We'll all be judged by our words (Matt. 12:36-37), so we should speak slowly (James 1:19), only to build others up (1 Thess. 5:11). A Christian should live their life to please God and not people (Matt. 6:1). Jesus told us to live for heavenly things, not earthly (Matt. 6:19-21). Through Him, we can live holy lives (1 Pet. 1:15) to build others up with peace (Rom. 14:19).

## BIBLE VERSES TO CONSIDER

Matthew 6:22-23 “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!”

2 John 12 “I have much to write to you, but I do not want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to visit you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete.”

Hebrews 10:25 “Not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Matthew 12:36-37 “But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”

James 1:19 "My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry"

1 Thessalonians 5:11 "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."

Matthew 6:1 "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven."

Proverbs 10:19 "Sin is not ended by multiplying words, but the prudent hold their tongues."

Ephesians 5:16 "Making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil."

1 Corinthians 10:23 "'I have the right to do anything,' you say—but not everything is beneficial. 'I have the right to do anything'—but not everything is constructive."

1 Corinthians 10:31 "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

Matthew 6:19-21 (Jesus) “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

1 Peter 1:15 “But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do.”

Romans 14:19 “Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.”

1 Corinthians 15:33 “Do not be misled: ‘Bad company corrupts good character.’

Romans 12:2 “Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Ephesians 4:29 "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

Romans 1:28-32 "Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them."

Proverbs 18:2 "Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions."

Mark 8:36 "What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?"

Colossians 4:6 "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

Leviticus 19:16 "Do not go about spreading slander among your people. Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor's life. I am the Lord."

James 1:17 "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."

Colossians 3:17 "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

Proverbs 17:27-28 “The one who has knowledge uses words with restraint, and whoever has understanding is even-tempered. Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent, and discerning if they hold their tongues.”

Proverbs 18:13 “To answer before listening— that is folly and shame.”

Proverbs 10:31-32 “From the mouth of the righteous comes the fruit of wisdom, but a perverse tongue will be silenced. The lips of the righteous know what finds favor, but the mouth of the wicked only what is perverse.”

Hebrews 3:13 “But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called ‘Today,’ so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.”

## STATS & QUOTES TO CONSIDER

For context, as of January 2019, total worldwide population is 7.7 billion

The internet has 4.2 billion users

There are 3.397 billion active social media users

On average, people have 5.54 social media accounts

The average daily time spent on social is 116 minutes a day

When asked 81% of teenagers felt social media has a positive effect on their lives

300 hours of video are uploaded to Youtube every minute

People now watch 1 billion hours of YouTube videos every day

The average person watches 40 minutes of YouTube content a day



94% of American 18-24-year olds use YouTube

In 2014, the most searched term was music. The second was Minecraft

Over 95 million photos are uploaded each day

There are 4.2 billion Instagram Likes per day

90 percent of Instagram users are younger than 35

Snapchat has 187m active daily users

60% of them are under 25

78% of American 18-24-year olds use the platform

81% of parents report their kids start using Facebook between 8 and 13 years of age.

The average Facebook user has 155 friends only the platform but would only trust 4 of them in a crisis.

Instagram has 500 million daily active users.

71% of Instagram users are millennials (or younger).

Some 78% of 18- to 24-year-olds use Snapchat

71% visit the platform multiple times per day.

71% of Americans of 18- to 24-year-olds now use Instagram

94% of 18- to 24-year-olds use YouTube.

82% of Snapchat users ages 18 to 24 say they use the platform daily, with 71% indicating that they use it multiple times per day.

81% of Instagram users in this age group visit the platform on daily basis, with 55% reporting that they do so several times per day

76 percent of teens use social media (81 percent of older teens, 68 percent of teens ages 13 and 14).

While some people may compensate loneliness by finding connections on social media, that can provide a false sense of relief.

Young people with the highest rates of social media use reported very similar feelings of loneliness to those who barely use it

Social media does have an impact on loneliness.

So far, research shows that virtual contact isn't adequate. Social media provides countless avenues for teens to connect. Yet it offers just as many ways to feel excluded—and doesn't replace personal contact.

Spending too long on social networking sites could be adversely affecting your mood. In fact, you're more likely to report poor mental health, including symptoms of anxiety and depression.

While social media made making friends easier, it also made it easier for predators to find victims. The anonymity that social networks provide can be used by the perpetrators to gain people's trust and then terrorize them in front of their peers.

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is a phenomenon that was born at the same time as Facebook—and it's one of the most common negative effects of social media. FOMO is basically a form of anxiety that you get when you're scared of missing out on a positive experience or emotions that someone else is getting.

Social Media helps you to form unrealistic expectations of life and friendships. The networks that do it most are Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat

Today, body image is an issue for many people of both sexes. Of course, seeing those perfect in accordance with the society standards people on a daily basis makes you conscious about how different you look from those pictures. And not everyone comes to the right conclusions in this situation.

On top of increased rates of anxiety and depression, spending too much time on social media can lead to poor sleep. Numerous studies have shown that increased use of social media has a negative effect on your sleep quality.

Social media is often described as being more addictive than cigarettes and alcohol. With the worst social media apps being Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat when it comes to addiction.

People use social media to vent about everything from customer service to politics, but the downside to this is that our feeds often resemble an endless stream of stress

A study published in the journal Computers and Human Behaviour found that people who report using seven or more social media platforms were more than three times as likely as people using 0-2 platforms to have high levels of general anxiety symptoms.

Social media sites make more than half of users feel inadequate, according to a survey of 1,500 people by disability charity Scope, and half of 18- to 34-year-olds say it makes them feel unattractive.

A 2016 study by researchers at Penn State University suggested that viewing other people's selfies lowered self-esteem, because users compare themselves to photos of people looking their happiest

A study published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine last year surveyed 7,000 19- to 32-year-olds and found that those who spend the most time on social media were twice as likely to report experiencing social isolation, which can include a lack of a sense of social belonging, engagement with others and fulfilling relationships.

Experts have not been in total agreement on whether internet addiction is a real thing, let alone social media addiction, but there's some good evidence that both may exist. A review study from Nottingham Trent University looked back over earlier research on the psychological characteristics, personality and social media use. The authors conclude that "it may be plausible to speak specifically of 'Facebook Addiction Disorder'...because addiction criteria, such as neglect of personal life, mental preoccupation, escapism, mood modifying experiences, tolerance and concealing the addictive behavior, appear to be present in some people who use [social networks] excessively."

The more we use social media, the less happy we seem to be.

Studies have certainly shown that social media use triggers feelings of jealousy. The authors of one study, looking at jealousy and other negative feelings while using Facebook, wrote that "This magnitude of envy incidents taking place on FB alone is astounding, providing evidence that FB offers a breeding ground for invidious feelings."

They add that it can become a vicious cycle: feeling jealous can make a person want to make his or her own life look better, and post jealousy-inducing posts of their own, in an endless circle of one-upping and feeling jealous.

When teenagers are spending an excessive part of their free time on social media, it means they are spending less time on activities that would increase new mental skills, on hobbies and especially physical movement. When we exercise our body releases endorphins that interact with receptors in our brain to trigger a positive feeling and help reduce depression. Because they are more sedentary, teens are not receiving these feel-good endorphins and are also not getting the benefits of improved self-esteem.

Research has revealed a correlation between the heavy use of social media and “perceived social isolation.” Teenagers may induce anxiety from worrying about why they’re not invited to a party they see on Facebook or Instagram. It’s what our culture has called “fear of missing out” or FOMO. Teens use social media believing it’s what



connects them to others, when in fact it takes them out of the present moment and their life. This, in turn, makes them feel more isolated.

Social media is detrimental to face-to-face interaction

As human beings, it's so important for us to be able to communicate and forge personal connections with one another. However, it can be hard to do so when we're glued to rectangular screens, becoming more acquainted with our friends' digital facades than their real-life personas.