

*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.*

## ROMANCE & DATING

35% of teens have some experience with dating or romantic relationships. 18% are currently in one, 14% considering it serious, 5% not<sup>168</sup>. 12% ages 13-14 and 36% ages 15-17 in a relationship have had sex<sup>168</sup>. One in four teens dated someone they met online<sup>169</sup>. Texting and talking are the two most common ways teens spend time with their partners, 72% texting daily and 39% talking daily. 85% expect to hear from their partner at least once a day, and 11% expect it hourly<sup>169</sup>. Phones and social media lead to connecting, meeting and flirting<sup>172</sup>, but also break ups, jealousy<sup>171</sup>, abuse, unrealistic expectations<sup>170</sup>, sexting (10% of teens<sup>172</sup>) and more.

The Bible says romantic relationships are designed by God to lead to marriage of man and woman (Gen 2:24) centered on Jesus (Eph. 5:32-33), and sex for marriage (Heb. 13:4) as a good gift (Prov. 5:18-19). We should prioritize God (Deut. 6:5), not rushing romance (Songs. 2:7). Christians should seek relationships with Christians (2 Cor. 6:14-15), respecting parents (Eph. 6:1) and church leaders (Heb. 13:17). Until then, we are to guard our hearts (Prov. 4:23) and treat each other in purity as family (1 Tim. 5:1-2) with God's guidance (Prov. 3:6).

## BIBLE VERSES TO CONSIDER

Genesis 2:24 "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh."

Ephesians 5:32-33 (On Marriage) "This mystery is profound, but I am speaking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband."

Hebrews 13:4 "Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral."

Proverbs 5:18-19 "May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer— may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be intoxicated with her love."

Deuteronomy 6:5 "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."

Song of Songs 2:7, 3:5 & 8:4 "don't awaken love until it so desires"

2 Corinthians 6:14-15 "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?"

Ephesians 6:1 "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."

Hebrews 13:17 "Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you."

Proverbs 4:23 "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."

1 Timothy 5:1-2 "Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity."

Proverbs 3:6 "in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."

1 Corinthians 7:28 "those who marry will face many troubles in this life..."

Genesis 2:18 "The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'"

Matthew 19:5 (Jesus) "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."

Colossians 3:20 "Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord."

Colossians 3:5 "Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry."

1 Corinthians 6:18 "Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body."

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."

1 Corinthians 15:33 "Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character.""

1 Corinthians 7:9 "But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion."

Proverbs 31:10 "A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies."

Proverbs 15:22 "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed."

Proverbs 18:22 "He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord."

Ephesians 5:25 "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."

1 Corinthians 16:14 "Do everything in love."

Matthew 19:6 "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate."

Proverbs 12:4 "A wife of noble character is her husband's crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones."

Proverbs 31:30 "Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised."

1 John 4:19 "We love because he first loved us."

1 John 4:8 "Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love."

Romans 12:9 "Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good."

2 Thessalonians 3:5 "May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance."

## STATS & QUOTES TO CONSIDER

35% of Teens Have Some Experience with Dating or Romantic Relationships; 18% Are Currently in a Relationship of Some Kind.

14% of teens are currently in a relationship they consider to be serious with a boyfriend, girlfriend or significant other.

5% of teens are in a current romantic relationship, but do not consider it to be serious.

Some 64% of teens indicate that they have never been in a romantic relationship of any kind.

Older teens are more likely to have experience with dating and relationships, and they also are more likely to be sexually active.

36% of 15- to 17-year-olds with romantic relationship experience have had sex, compared with 12% of 13- to 14-year-olds with relationship experience.

For today's teens, social media and modern technology play a huge role in how high school couples meet, communicate and break-up.

One in four teens have dated or hooked up with someone they initially encountered online.

Half of all teens have let someone know they were interested in them romantically by friending them on Facebook or another social media site.

47% of teens have expressed their attraction by liking, commenting or otherwise interacting with that person on social media.

Text messaging and talking on the phone are the top two ways that teens spend time with their romantic partners.

72% of teens communicate with their romantic partners through text every day, compared with 39% of teens in romantic relationships who talk on the phone daily.

85% of teen daters expect to hear from their significant other at least once a day, and 11% expect to hear from them hourly.

27% of teens with dating experience have had a partner use social media to track their whereabouts. Another 27% of teens with dating experience say social media makes them feel jealous or unsure of their relationship.

27% of teen daters have broken up with someone via text message, and 31% have been broken up with in this way.

43% of teen daters have untagged or deleted photos of themselves and a past partner on social media. In addition, 42% percent have unfriended or blocked someone they used to be in a relationship with on social media.

63% of teen daters who use social media agree that social media allows people to support them when a relationship ends.

Sometimes adolescents have idealistic views about relationships.

Some youth find themselves in violent dating relationships. Dating violence can be emotional, physical, or sexual. Dating violence also includes stalking.

Aside from in-person flirting, social media is the most common way teens express interest in someone they have a crush on.

Nearly three-quarters (72%) of teen daters say they spend time texting with their partner daily.

Technology can make teens feel more connected and closer to their partner; it can also cause feelings of jealousy and uncertainty.

55% of teens flirt with the object of their romantic interest and talk to them in person.

50% of teens friend them on Facebook or any other social network.

47% of teens interact with them on social media by liking and commenting on their pictures and posts.

46% of teens share some funny content with them online.

31% of teens send the flirtatious messages.

11% of teens create a music playlist.

10% of teens send flirty or sexy photos or videos of themselves.

7% of teens shoot a video.