



WHAT'S UP?

A PAGE FOR PARENTS OF TEENS

The newsletter designed to help you better understand and relate to today's youth culture and your church's teenagers— including your own.

FALL 2018

CULTURE WATCH



Teens are bombarded these days with images of perfectly sculpted athletes, models, and celebrities. The culture worships the toned physique and has redefined physical beauty as sculpted "perfection." There are many problems with this philosophy that physical appearance defines true beauty. One major problem is how this philosophy affects the next generation's self-worth.

Young people naturally want what the culture says is valuable. Physical "perfection" is of utmost importance to this culture, therefore many young people also want to achieve it for themselves. Unfortunately this desire for physical "beauty" within many teens has resulted in eating disorders. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, 2.7 percent of individuals will struggle with an eating disorder in their lifetime. Some may interpret that

percentage to be rather low, but it still concerns many people. Of the 320 million people in the US, 8.64 million will struggle with an eating disorder, the majority of which will be teenagers.

With the increased pressure to look a certain way, more and more teenagers battle the temptation to do whatever it takes to achieve their desired look, which includes various eating disorders. Individu-

als who battle eating disorders, though, will often try to keep it hidden. Here are some common symptoms:

- Sudden weight loss (especially if it is nearing spring or summer)
- Frequent talk about being overweight, fat, or not fit "enough"
- Frequent sudden mood swings
- Lying about what they have been eating
- Avoiding meals with groups of family or friends

The next generation needs to learn what it means to have a healthy self-image, a healthy understanding of beauty, and a healthy perspective of true happiness. If you suspect that your teen may be struggling with an eating disorder, schedule an appointment with his or her pediatrician immediately.

HEADS UP!

The articles in *Forward* and *Velocity* magazines provide great discussion starters for you and your teen. Also, devotions for teens cover the same topics as the adult devotions in *FUSION* and *FUSION*Next, creating opportunities for family Bible study. Read them, discuss them, and use them as a tool for discipleship in the home.

Randall House can help provide resources to find answers to the hard questions. Contact hardquestions@randallhouse.com.

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Spend some intentional time with your family pouring into each other, as well as others. Make pizza together. Clean the house together. Pass out candy to neighbors and friends. Do something kind for someone. Donate books to your local library. Eat brunch together. These are moments your family can learn from and cherish in the years to come.

PARENTING TEENS

Parents need to have healthy conversations about self-image and self-worth with their children and teens. With eating disorders becoming more common among teenagers, this potential battle in our teens' lives needs to be included in those conversations. Here are some steps to take in helping teens deal with these issues:

1. Ask meaningful questions.

As parents, we must never be afraid to talk to our teenagers about things that may cause them harm. An unhealthy perspective on body image is one of them. Learn to ask questions that will require meaningful answers. Do not be afraid to address the possibility of a potential eating disorder in your teen. If the questions are primarily superficial, then the problem will remain a secret.

2. Share your own struggles with self-image.

There is tre-

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mendous value in being vulnerable to our children. We must let our children become aware of our own struggles with the same issue. They are not alone, and this truth can be the most encouraging thing for any teen who may be battling low self-esteem, or even an eating disorder.

3. Always point them back to Scripture.

We need this type of conversation to become normal and frequent in our homes. Remind your teens that they are fearfully and wonderfully made, and everyone is made in the image of God. What does Scripture tell them about beauty? Their identity is not in achieving a specific look. Their identity is in Christ and Christ alone.

4. Develop a game plan and participate in it.

There is nothing wrong with pursuing physical health. So, help your teen pursue health. Develop a game plan that will encourage her to eat well and exercise, but help your teen stick to it by participating in it with them. Be sure to include a spiritual component to it, like a daily quiet time routine that can set her up for spiritual health as well.

ON the CALENDAR

- Sep 5** Cheese Pizza Day
- Sep 11** Make Your Bed Day
- Sep 19** Talk Like a Pirate Day
- Sep 23** First Day of Fall
- Oct 5** Do Something Nice Day
- Oct 14** National Dessert Day
- Oct 25** World Pasta Day
- Oct 30** Candy Corn Day
- Nov 3** Book Lover's Day
- Nov 11** Veterans Day
- Nov 13** Young Reader's Day
- Nov 28** French Toast Day

CELEBRATE!

POSITIVE NEWS ABOUT TEENS

Instead of selling her old prom dress online to make some spare cash, a teen decided to donate her dress, as well as shoes and makeup, for a girl in need who might not otherwise get to dress up for prom. This girl's selflessness inspired many other girls to do the same. It's amazing how many teens choose to use their social platforms to help others. What's even more amazing is that many teens choose to follow their peers and do something good for others.

