



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.

WINTER 2018-19

CULTURE WATCH



The pressure teens face to hold and maintain a prominent social identity is becoming increasingly more difficult and dangerous. According to the Pew Research Center, 85% of 13- to 17-year-olds use YouTube, compared to 72% for Instagram, 69% for Snapchat, and only 51% for Facebook (though 35% of teens say they use Snapchat most often, compared to 32% for YouTube and 15% for Instagram). In addition, 95% of teens report owning or having access to a smartphone, and 45% say they're online on a "near-constant basis."

It's no secret that this generation of young people naturally wants what the culture says is valuable and popular. The survey also found that there was no clear consensus among teens about the effect that social media has on the lives of young people today. Minorities of teens describe that effect as mostly positive (31%) or mostly negative (24%), but the largest share (45%) says that effect has been neither positive nor negative. Interestingly, another 12% criticize social media for influencing teens to give in to peer pressure, while others express concerns that

these sites could lead to psychological issues or drama.

With the ever-increasing pressure to appear a certain way in every social setting, more and more teenagers are experiencing loneliness, anxiety, worry, and even depression like never before. This generation (Generation Z) is extremely concerned with maintaining a certain appearance before their fellow peers, and the pressure of keeping this high-profile status is draining and toxic.

Dr. Jeff Nalin, a licensed Clinical Psychologist, a certified Chemical

Dependency Intervention Specialist, and a certified Youth Residential Treatment Administrator, urges parents to stay actively involved in the lives of their teens, understanding the benefits and dangers of social media.

It is our solemn responsibility as followers of Christ to help teenagers find their worth, purpose, and satisfaction in Christ and not in their social media platforms. Let's determine to point this younger generation to the One who sticks closer than a brother through the good, the bad, and the ugly. And let's teach them the value of being in Christ.

You will find the full report from the Pew Research Center here: <http://www.pewinternet.org/2018/05/31/teens-social-media-technology-2018/>

You will find Dr. Nalin's discussion here: <https://adaa.org/learn-from-us/from-the-experts/blog-posts/consumer/social-media-and-teen-depression-two-go-hand>

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 *FUSIONnext*, creating opportunities for family Bible study. Read them, discuss them, and use them as a tool for discipleship in the home.

HEADS UP!

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

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Make the most of the winter season with your family. Carve out intentional time to spend together during the busy holiday season. Bake brownies, go caroling, have a spaghetti night, make a pact to give compliments, leave your mail carrier a thank-you note—find fun ways to let your family and those around you know you care.



PARENTING TEENS

Parents need to have healthy and ongoing conversations with their teens about social media and self-worth. Knowing that teens feel pressured to maintain a social status should embolden parents to speak about the importance of finding our identity in Christ and not in online platforms. The truth is, either we are teaching our teens where to find their identity or someone else is. Here are some steps to take in helping teens deal with these issues:

1. Be intentional. More than anything, teens want and need their parents to be intentional with them about their identity. The Bible also calls dads and moms to be intentional about how and when they disciple their children. When it comes to social media use, the influence and instruction of parents carries a lot of weight. Although teens may not admit it, they need their parents to be intentional with them about their social media use and how to develop healthy and holy habits.

2. Invite them into meaningful conversations. As parents, we must never be afraid to talk to our teenagers about things that may cause them harm. Social media is certainly one of those areas where

we must speak up and speak out. Invite your teens into meaningful conversations about the positive and negative consequences of social media. Establish a game plan to help your teen find their identity in Christ and not in social media platforms.

3. Set limits on social media use. There is tremendous value in setting limits on how much social media time teens can have. Part of setting limits means that parents must be intentional to spend quality time with their teens. Establish daily time for your family that does not involve a cell phone or Internet access. Perhaps this time could be when you sit down together to eat a meal or a time later in the evening.

4. 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 who they are? What does it mean to be in Christ? Share verses of Scripture with your teen that can serve as a sword and shield to defend and protect them from the pressure to be someone they are not online.

ON the CALENDAR

- Dec 2** Advent begins
- Dec 8** National Brownie Day
- Dec 20** Go Caroling Day
- Dec 31** New Year's Eve
- Jan 4** National Spaghetti Day
- Jan 8** Bubble Bath Day
- Jan 21** Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Jan 24** Compliment Day
- Feb 4** Thank a Mail Carrier Day
- Feb 14** Valentine's Day
- Feb 20** Love Your Pet Day
- Feb 27** Polar Bear Day

CELEBRATE!

POSITIVE NEWS ABOUT TEENS

A teen in Richmond, Virginia realized there were many kids around her living in poverty who had never had a birthday party. So this teen decided to do something about it. She founded a nonprofit to help kids living in poverty have memorable birthday parties. Her nonprofit provides food, fun, decorations, and cake. Talk about making a difference for those in need!

Do you like *What's Up?*

Let us know what you think, and make any suggestions for improvements. Contact us at fusion@d6family.com or call 800-877-7030.