

thESource *Bible Study*

Can We Hold Hands...? *by Darrell Zimmerman* Thoughts on Teens and Sex **How to Show Your Date that You Really do Care**

Most observers of American teen culture agree. We are in the midst of a crisis because of a continuing sexual revolution among our youth.

The voices of television popular music, ready access to birth control, abortion on demand peer pressure, and the natural longing to love and be loved roar loudly, encouraging sexual promiscuity. The message of God's will and wisdom for human sexuality seems, by comparison, scarcely heard. A large number of inattentive parents, silent preachers, and uninformed church groups stand idly by. As a result, surveys identify practically no difference in the rates of teen pregnancy sexual activity, and age of first sexual encounter between church youth and other young persons. Our youth, however, are searching for help, answers, and ammunition with which to wage war against this dangerous foe.

A frank and thorough discussion is needed between church leaders, parents, and teens on matters of God's will for human sexuality within marriage (His most beautiful and powerful gift for intimacy in a human relationship). Teens need to explore appropriate levels of physical expressions of affection outside of marriage.

Discuss with your pastor or district youth executive the importance and possibility of a more intensive course of study on youth and God's will for their sexuality.

This Bible study is an attempt to open lines of communication among teens and between teens and church leaders on this important topic.

Objectives

Young people will:

- know and identify God's established guidelines for our sexual life;
- discover and understand that these God-given guidelines are for our good;
- identify displays of physical affection that can lead to sinful behavior; and
- develop God-pleasing guidelines for displaying physical affection.

Materials

You will need the following:

- Note cards with these Bible texts printed out and numbered, to be read by youth in this order: (1) 1 Thessalonians 4:3; (2) Hebrews 13:4; (3) Proverbs 6:32; (4) Exodus 20:14; (5) 1 Corinthians 10:8; (6) Matthew 5:28; (7) 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; (8) Proverbs 6:27-28.
- An open, frank, and caring attitude. This topic can make us all nervous (some silliness during the discussion can be expected), but young people will appreciate your willingness to help and to listen.
- To be prepared to review the stories of Joseph and David.
- Pencils for everyone.
- Enough copies of the following handout for everyone.

Originally published in Youth Ministry Quarterly 90:3.

© 1994 by the Board for Youth Services, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1333 South Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122.

Republished and revised in March 2011 for thESource.

thESource is published on the Web by LCMS District & Congregational Services—Youth Ministry. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1333 South Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295; 1-800-248-1930; www.youthesource.com. Editor: Sherrah Holobaugh Behrens. VOL. 8 NO. 3. March 2011.

www.youthESource.com

Can We Hold Hands...?

Thoughts on Teens and Sex

How to Show Your Date that You Really do Care

1. Remember a time when you learned about fire and how hot it can be? Did your parents have rules about fire, the stove, or other heat sources? What were they? Did you learn from the rules, or did you have to learn from a bad experience?

2. Look at two men from the Bible who were close to the heat. One got burned; the other escaped harm. Briefly recount the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39 and 41:39-40). Compare it to the story of David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11-12).

How was Joseph's response to sexual temptation rewarded? How did David's response lead him into great sin as he turned his back on God.

3. Pass out the cards upon which you have written selected Bible verses. Tell the youth to listen carefully as the passages are read aloud. Stress that God has established guidelines for the behavior of His people

Talk about God's purpose for sex by marking whether you **Agree**, **Disagree** or are **Not Sure** about the following statements. Be prepared to discuss your choices.

A D NS God doesn't want us to get burned.

A D NS God is trying to take all the fun out of dating.

A D NS God made us and He made sex for marriage. He knows what is best.

A D NS When people who aren't married "go too far" someone is always hurt.

A D NS God understands how strong sexual feelings are.

A D NS If two people really love each other it doesn't matter how far they go sexually.

A D NS Once you start to express your affection in a physical way, you can't stop.

4. Sexual intercourse is one of God's great gifts to men and women. He has reserved sexual intercourse for married couples as a way to express the intimate bond and commitment of love they share and for the procreation of children (see Matthew 19:4-6 or 1 Corinthians 7:2-4). God has established marriage for the benefit and happiness of His people.

- What plans does God have for your marriage? What does He want it to be like? Why? How will saving yourself sexually for your marriage partner (whoever it might be) help make your future marriage stronger?

- Make a list of ways that a physical relationship, at different levels, might be damaging for unmarried couples. Share your list with the group.

- Physical damage -

- Spiritual damage -

- Emotional damage -

- Damage to relationships -

- Do you agree with this statement:

A D NS God's rules for our chastity are for our protection and benefit.

5. Many young people have already "gone too far" and are involved in behavior that is hurting them. If they want a fresh start, what hope does God give them for breaking this cycle? (See 1 John 1:0; Psalm 32: 1-5, 2 Samuel 12:13.)

What can you do to help someone break a harmful cycle? Can your group help?

6. God's mercy and forgiveness are indeed wonderful, but His intention is that Christians avoid sin and situations that could lead us into temptation. What help does God provide His people in honoring Him with their sexuality (1 Timothy 4:4-5)?

The Bible does not give Christians specific guidelines concerning the limits of physical displays of affection outside of marriage. We do have to make good decisions and it is certainly reckless to just let our feelings guide us. Responsible people who wish to date in a God-pleasing manner must be prepared ahead of time to stay within His limits. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7. When you have to decide how far is okay, which of the following factors do you consider the most important? Rate your top five on a scale, with 1 being the most important, 2 next most important, etc.

- _____ I must be careful not to offend my date.
- _____ Each individual has a different point at which their arousal becomes uncontrollable.
- _____ The way I dress and at can affect my date's sexual feelings, good or bad.
- _____ I or my date may be having spiritual struggles. Feeling guilty about necking or petting might make that struggle worse.
- _____ I want our relationship to grow in the right direction.
- _____ God punishes immorality.
- _____ My future spouse (whoever it might be) is counting on me to save my most intimate expressions of love for her or him.
- _____ What is okay for me may not be okay for my date.
- _____ "Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).
- _____ It's sometimes hard to tell what is "too far" and therefore harmful to my date and myself.
- _____ When non-Christians observe my behavior, I want them to understand what my faith truly means to me by what they see me do.
- _____ God blesses obedience.
- _____ God the Spirit helps me to glorify Him in the way I use my body.
- _____ Alcohol and other drugs affect my ability to make good decision.
- _____ Too much time alone with a date makes temptation greater.

Discuss your choices with your group.

7. Now, using your top five choices (or new ones if discussion was helpful) write for yourself five God-pleasing guidelines for expressing affection.
 -
 -
 -
 -
 -

If you feel comfortable, share one or two items from your list.

8. Close with prayer thanking God for the gifts of friendship, sexuality, love, forgiveness, romance, and family. Ask for wisdom and strength to follow the Lord's will with excitement and joy.