

# A Trip Down To The Roots

A closer look at the newest Teen Trend

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## A Trip Down To the Roots

### **Keep Looking Down**

What makes a good cake? A good recipe and being able to do exactly as it says. What makes a bad cake? Not following instructions carefully. The difference between success and failure is the roots, a bad cake is not determined by its looks or smell, it is determined by its ingredients, how long it was baked for, and the process of making it. Likewise, many of the social problems in our time may have an appealing appearance; it is only what is seen on the surface. To really examine a problem one must dig down deep into the roots to find the core of the problem. Therefore, the social problem I will be addressing is teen pregnancy; however, I believe it is really caused by its “roots” teenage dating.

### **IT's the *thing***

Teenage dating might not be something one considers a “social problem”, but is it not the biggest trend right now that is causing the most trouble in the lives of teenagers? What can a little dating do to teenagers right? Wrong, having teens spend all their time on this outside activity is taking away time that they could be spending with family, on academics, and from the view of a Christian, God. Nowadays teenagers spend the most time pursuing a love life, after they have found it, they spend all their time focusing on this so called love life. In addition, teens dating are also at the cost of their parents, first of all, all the time they spend on the phone talking to their significant other and the text messages they send, most of the time the parents are ones paying for their phone payments. As Michelle Slatalla wrote in The New York Times referring to her daughter who has just graduated from high school saying, “Everyone in our household uses them like lifelines — for e-mail and text messages, for sharing photos and connecting to the Internet to look up street addresses. Still, one family member consistently fails to live within the

monthly budget.” This shows the fear of parents paying for the phone bills of their teenagers. Secondly, the ones who do not have any means of transportation need a ride from his or her parents in order for him or her to go out on a date. In addition, according to Newsday.com the rise of gasoline prices in Long Island had “...an increase of 9.8 cents [per gallon] from a week earlier [prior to November 28, 2007.” (Incantalupo) averaging up to \$3.48 per gallon. Also, in New York prices raised up to \$99.29 a barrel. As the prices of gasoline are on the rise, it is pretty evident that many parents would not like to spend that money being the taxi of their sons and daughters.

### **A Pot of Boiling Water**

Aside from the teenagers losing their priorities while trapped in “love” and the parents at the cost of their needs; the next root must be examined: the progression of a relationship. Anne Ong, a very respectable Pastor whom I often seek advice from and is also my mother, once explained to me that a relationship is like a pot of boiling water. She said, “When a relationship first starts: it is slow, then it starts boiling, the water will get hotter, and finally it will reach a point where the water needs to be used or disposed of, if not the water will soon evaporate.” What Pastor Ong meant by this was in any relationship, it is always very exciting at first and it will progressively become “more exciting.” For example, when he or she first touches his or her significant other’s hands it is a very electrifying memorable moment. However, the second time would not be as exciting as the first, so he or she would have to move on to the next step, and when that step is no longer exciting they move on, so on and so forth. Then finally they will reach a point in which they have to make a decision whether or not to have sex; if they do not have sex the relationship will stay at a point in which it will probably soon “evaporate;” not

wanting that to happen many teenagers decide to have sex, hoping it would once again excite their relationship.

### **Deal or No Deal?**

As a teenager, I know the feeling of wanting a relationship, or wanting to be exclusive with that special someone. However, is not the purpose of dating to lead up to marriage? Are any teenagers ready to be married without getting divorced in the near future? It is not a sin to date, but there is absolutely no purpose in doing so at this time when marriage is not in any teenagers' consideration. In the Bible, 1 Corinthians 6: 12 it states "Everything is permissible for me"—but not everything is beneficial. 'Everything is permissible for me'—but I will not be mastered by anything.'" In addition, what are the intentions of each of the teenagers involved in a relationship? I have asked many friends of mine who are participating in this teen trend of why they are with this certain someone and almost every answer I would get in return is, "I love him/her." How can we say we love someone when we cannot even commit to the same cell phone for more than half a year? Furthermore, surveys in the past of showed that the reason a male gets involved in a relationship is they wish to be able to have sex, while females are in relationships hoping they would receive some love. Concluding that the male and the female would get together and have a "trade," the girl would get what she thinks is love and the boy would get his want of sex by giving the girl "love." The reason the girl is so desperate for love is because of insecurity, which I define as the lack of support from family and not having a safety net. I define insecurity in such a way because I believe if a girl has enough support and love from her family she would not need to seek an outside source to receive love, and if she had a safety net, in my case, God, she would know that even if the whole world turns on her, our God would be here for her.

### **You, me, the Government**

The social problem of teen pregnancy might not be around me every day, but the roots of it never leave my side. I tend to convince my friends not to get involved in a relationship because of the consequences it could bring upon. For example, when jumping from relationship to relationship while dating it could turn into a habit during marriage; when their marriage meets a problem they would rather end the marriage and find a more suitable companion and the cycle goes on. I also explain to them the “pot of boiling water” theory and how the progression of a relationship could lead to sex and therefore lead to teen pregnancy, a great responsibility that no teenagers are willing to carry. Lastly, the main point that I emphasize on is cleanliness and purity of the body. It clearly states in the Bible, “Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.” (1 Corinthians 6:18-20). Our body is not our own that we may choose to do whatever we please with it, it is the temple of the Holy Spirit, the instrument of God, and was bought at a price of Jesus Christ’s death. Once again, in Paul’s letter to Timothy he says, “Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” (2 Timothy 2:22). Paul knows that Timothy as a teenager is challenged daily with lust and temptation; therefore, warning him to stay pure and be with those who call on the Lord. In the say way, I advise my friends and teenagers around me to flee from temptation as Joseph did in the Old Testament and be with those who call on the Lord with a pure heart.

Politicians and the Government tend to avoid the subject of teen pregnancy because it leads to the controversial subject of abortion; however, there is a group called the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy. Their goal is to “improve the lives and

future prospects of children and families...[and] to help ensure that children are born into stable, two-parent families who are committed to and ready for the demanding task of raising the next generation.” They believe that if they are successful then our world would have less poverty and more chances for teenagers to achieve a higher education and other life goals, along with fewer abortions, making a stronger nation. Together with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, they came up with a “Putting What Works to Work (PWWTW)” in which they inform people about the research on teen pregnancy prevention and diseases that could be brought along when having sex. From the website were also graphs of teen pregnancy rates, teen sexual activity rates, and teen birth rates, which are attached on page 8.

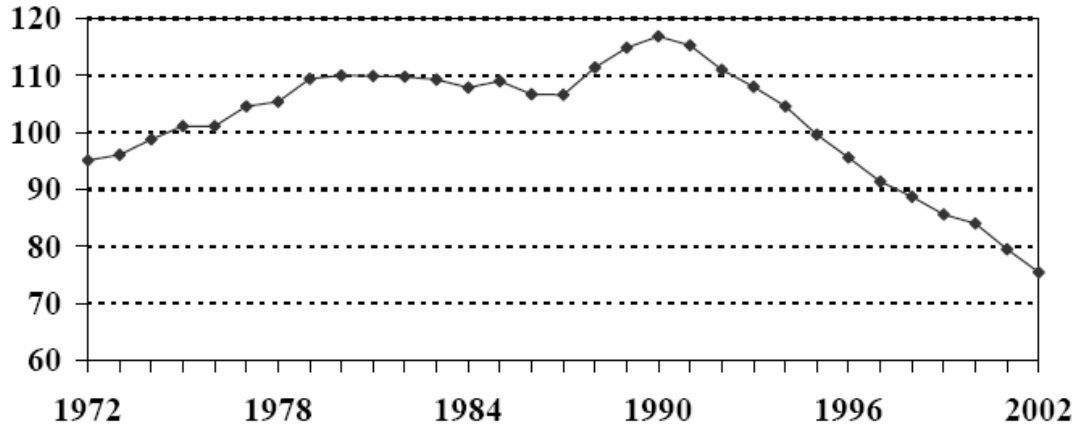
Although there are strong, ethical groups such as the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, the society we live in give teenagers a different perspective of teenage pregnancy. For example, the star of the Nickelodeon show “Zoey 101”, Jamie Lynn Spears, 16, is now pregnant. However, Robert Lloyd of Los Angeles Times believes that it is not a big deal because “There are a lot of pregnant teenagers in this country -- more than in any other developed nation -- and many more are having sex and not getting pregnant, of course, or getting anyone pregnant.” Concluding that it is no longer a shock that teenagers, or idols of teenagers area pregnant because everyone else is; our society has become immune to immorality and sin.

### **The Aftermath**

A seed is a miniature item when compared to a full grown tree; however, is it not the miniature seed that results into the full grown tree? Likewise teenage dating might be a small issue, but when placed in the big picture it is the cause of teen pregnancy. A problem such as teenage dating is something that can never be solved, therefore teenage pregnancy will continue. However, I believe if teenagers come before God and know that He’ll be our safety net and has

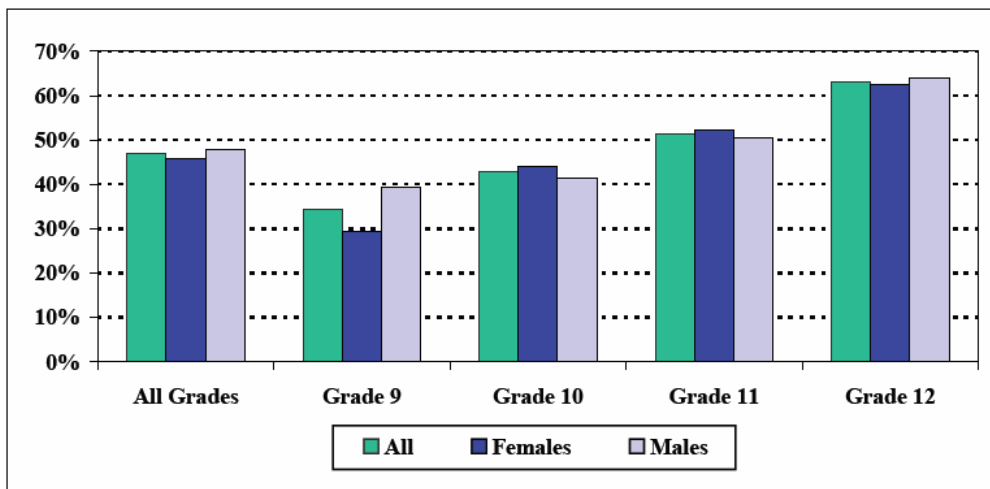
prepared a partner for each and every one of us, but we have to wait for His timing, then there would be less pregnant teenagers in our world.

Teen Pregnancy Rates in the United States from 1972-2002



1972	95	1980	111	1988	111	1996	96
1973	96	1981	110	1989	115	1997	91
1974	99	1982	110	1990	117	1998	89
1975	101	1983	109	1991	115	1999	86
1976	101	1984	108	1992	111	2000	84
1977	105	1985	109	1993	108	2001	80
1978	105	1986	107	1994	105	2002	75
1979	109	1987	107	1995	100		

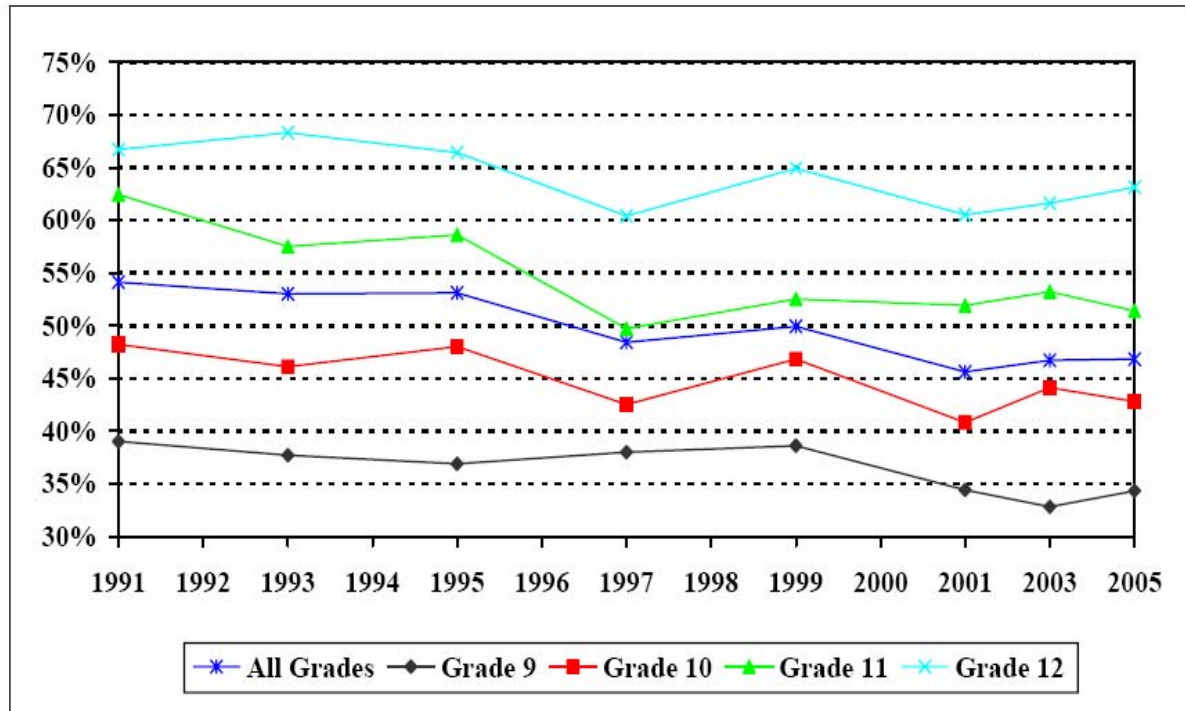
Proportion of High School Students Who Have Had Sex At Least Once, 2005 (Grades 9-12, YRBS)



	All Grades	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
All Teens	46.8%	34.3%	42.8%	51.4%	63.1%
Female Teens	45.7%	29.3%	44.0%	52.1%	62.4%
Male Teens	47.9%	39.3%	41.5%	50.6%	63.8%

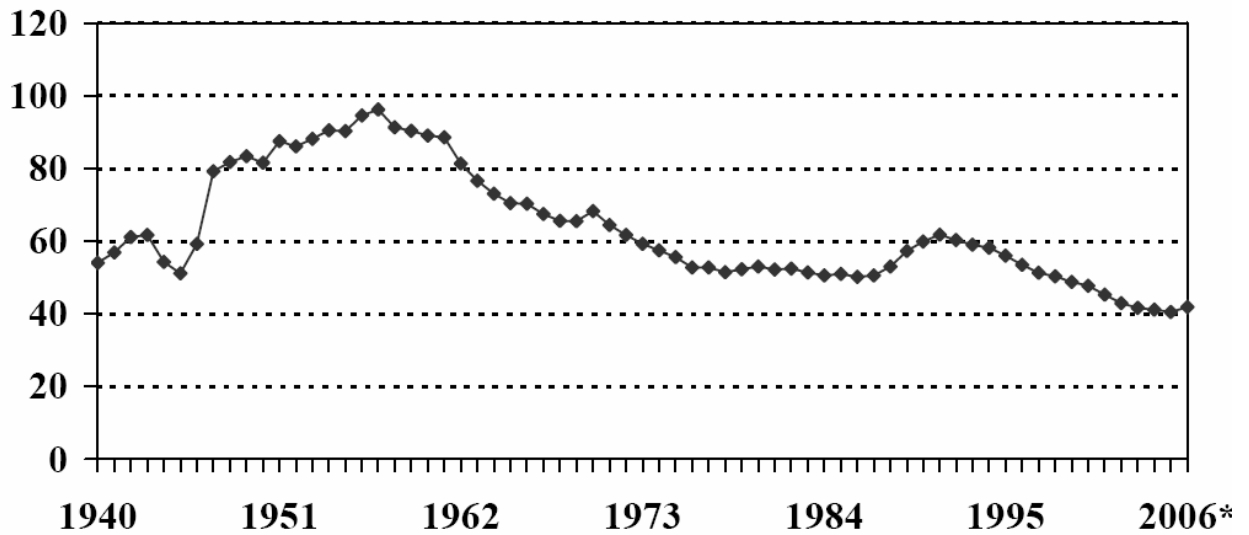


### Proportion of High School Students Who Have Had Sex At Least Once 1991 - 2005



	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005
<b>All Grades</b>	54.1%	53.0%	53.1%	48.4%	49.9%	45.6%	46.7%	46.8%
<b>Grade 9</b>	39.0%	37.7%	36.9%	38.0%	38.6%	34.4%	32.8%	34.3%
<b>Grade 10</b>	48.2%	46.1%	48.0%	42.5%	46.8%	40.8%	44.1%	42.8%
<b>Grade 11</b>	62.4%	57.5%	58.6%	49.7%	52.5%	51.9%	53.2%	51.4%
<b>Grade 12</b>	66.7%	68.3%	66.4%	60.4%	64.9%	60.5%	61.6%	63.1%

Teen Birth Rates in United States 1940-2006\*



1940	54.1	1951	78.6	1962	81.4	1973	59.3	1984	50.6	1995	56	2006*	41.9
1941	56.9	1952	86.1	1963	76.7	1974	57.5	1985	51	1996	53.5		
1942	61.1	1953	88.2	1964	73.1	1975	55.6	1986	50.2	1997	51.3		
1943	61.7	1954	90.6	1965	70.5	1976	52.8	1987	50.6	1998	50.3		
1944	54.3	1955	90.3	1966	70.3	1977	52.8	1988	53	1999	48.8		
1945	51.1	1956	94.6	1967	67.5	1978	51.5	1989	57.3	2000	47.7		
1946	59.3	1957	96.3	1968	65.6	1979	52.3	1990	59.9	2001	45.3		
1947	79.3	1958	91.4	1969	65.5	1980	53	1991	61.8	2002	42.9		
1948	81.8	1959	90.4	1970	68.3	1981	52.2	1992	60.3	2003	41.6		
1949	83.4	1960	89.1	1971	64.5	1982	52.4	1993	59	2004	41.1		
1950	81.6	1961	88.6	1972	61.7	1983	51.4	1994	58.2	2005	40.5		

\*Data for 2006 are preliminary

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The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy. ©The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy. The National Campaign. 06 Dec. 2007.

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