

YOUTH-2-PRAY: Gain your balance

Young people are extremely vulnerable to peer pressure to get involved in seemingly innocent "testing out" of things like alcohol, drugs, pornography, chat rooms and much more. All these things seem very cool until a friend dies of an overdose or is raped or falls pregnant. Will you as a teenager not consider praying for other teenagers for protection from these things?

1. **Religion:** The majority of teenagers and young adults in most parts of the world are religious, according to a massive 21-country study. Worldwide, almost 44% of young adults say they are deeply religious (not only Christian). Only 13% say they are not interested in God or faith in general. (*Christian Post*, 15 July '08).

Lord, I pray that You will touch the hearts and minds of young people across the globe to turn their hearts towards You and be radical followers and doers of Your Word.

2. **Obesity:** Teenagers who eat breakfast consume more daily calories but weigh less than those who skip the first meal of the day. Kids who skip breakfast tend to gain more weight, and would therefore be at a higher risk for obesity. Obesity leads to many other illnesses. (Website: http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=31&art_id=nw20080303181402244C183552&newslett=1&em=177813a1a20080304ah).

Lord, I pray for young people to become established in healthy habits like eating correctly, exercising and socialising sensibly. Help us to realise our bodies are a temple of Your Holy Spirit and that we were bought at a price. Help us to glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits which belong to You alone (1 Cor.6:19).

3. **Pornography:** About 81% of South African children between the ages of 13 and 17 have seen pornographic images on their friends' cellphones. Sixty-seven percent have been exposed to pornography through movies and, by the time they reach 18 years of age, 64% would have seen images of pornography on the Internet. About 45% of the respondents admitted to watching pornographic films regularly. More boys (84%) than girls (54%) have watched at least one pornographic film (Website: <http://iafrica.com/news/sa/652453.htm>).

Lord, we pray for our peers to watch out for the trap of watching pornography and becoming addicted to it. Help them understand that it is truly dangerous and harmful to the mind and spirit in the long run. As young people we submit to You. Strengthen us to resist the devil in Your Name. Teach us how to draw near to You, urge our generation to cleanse their hands and purify their hearts (Jas.4:7-8).

4. **Drugs:** Large amounts of alcohol inhibit self-consciousness and self-control and very often lead to and encourage irresponsible behaviour. While under the influence, teenagers are more likely to try drugs and have sex. It also increases exposure to being robbed, attacked and raped. (Source: Medical Council crime, violence and injury lead programme report 2004).

Lord, I pray for protection over teenagers who fall prey to peer pressure and lose their dignity. Help them realise the dangers and to say no to drugs and sex. Protect them from falling victim to robbery, physical abuse and violence or rape.

5. **Alcohol:** Binge drinking (having more than 5 drinks in a few hours) is becoming a great problem among teenagers. It causes alcohol poisoning and high blood pressure. It may cause heart failure, a stroke or suffocation if a person should pass out. Hospitals report that it is especially over the December holidays that teenagers who were left to care for themselves were treated for injuries, or in extreme cases, because their parents or guardians were too drunk themselves to do so. (Source: Medical Council crime, violence and injury lead programme report 2004).

Lord, I pray for parents and guardians who do not conduct themselves according to Your will. Please show them the truth of Jesus Christ. I cry out for teenagers who follow their example, or who drink for fun and become alcoholics. Please help them acknowledge their addiction and that they need help. Let them realise they are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, Your own special people, that they may proclaim Your praises who called them out of darkness into Your marvellous light (1 Pet.2:9).

6. **Cellphone, TV & computer games:** If you are fascinated by a hobby, feel captivated by it, and would like to spend as much time as possible pursuing it - this could be an outlet for learning, creativity, and self-expression. But in truly pathological addictions, the scale has tipped. The bad outweighs the good, resulting in serious disturbances in one's ability to function in the "real" world. Looking at it from a clinical perspective, these pathological addictions may be an attempt to control depression and anxiety, and may reflect deep insecurities and feelings of inner emptiness. (Website: <http://www.netaddiction.com>).

Lord, I pray for myself and other teenagers to recognise the line between enjoying games and becoming addicted. I ask that teenagers might wilfully restrict themselves from spending too much time playing games on the Internet or television. Also protect them from becoming involved with child predators in chat rooms, while using MXit etc. Help Christian teenagers to remember that they were raised with Christ in their lives, so that they might seek things above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Help them set their minds on things above, not things on earth (Col.3:1-2).

(South African help lines. Alcoholics Anonymous, tel.: 0861 435 722, Life Line, tel.: 0861 322 322).