

Why Shouldn't I Steady Date in High School?

Did you read that title clearly? It says, “Why shouldn't I steady date *in high school*.” Let's not make the assumption that we should never steady date, or we would have a major problem in the Church in our quest for exaltation. (Can anyone say, “eternal singles ward”?) The question is not *if* we steady date, but *when*. The Lord does want us to become involved in serious relationships that will lead us to the temple—but “in *his* time” (Ecclesiastes 3:11; emphasis added). The Lord has made it clear through his prophets that steady dating in high school is not the right time.

Timing Is Everything IS TIMING IMPORTANT? YOU BE THE JUDGE

- Try getting to the airport five minutes after your plane left.
- Try asking somebody on a date by calling at 5:30 AM.
- Try showing up to a party a half-hour early.
- Try eating cookies that are three minutes under-baked.



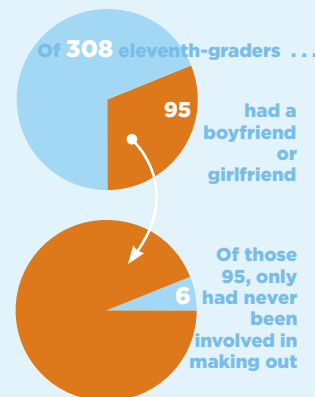
President Spencer W. Kimball taught, “There is definitely a time for . . . the date, and even for the steady date that will culminate in the romance which will take young people to the holy temple for eternal marriage. *But it is the timing that is so vital. It is wrong to do even the right things at the wrong time in the wrong place under the wrong circumstances.*”¹

The Familiarity Factor

A major reason why we should avoid forming serious relationships in high school is that *steady dating* leads to *steady temptation*.

Steady Dating and Steady Temptation

In a study of LDS teens conducted by Bruce Monson, he found that “of the 308 11th graders surveyed, 95 reported having a current boyfriend or girlfriend. Of those 95, only six had never been involved in making out (or kissing for a long time).”² (Remember that *For the Strength of Youth* says “Do not participate in passionate kissing.”³) Furthermore, *more than half* of those who had steady-dated had even more seriously transgressed the law of chastity.



The physical familiarity that comes from spending so much time with one person to whom you are attracted can lead to moral temptations and moral trouble. President Gordon B. Hinckley said: “Steady dating at an early age leads so often to tragedy. . . . Have a wonderful time, *but stay away from familiarity*. Keep your hands to yourself. It may not be easy, but it is possible.”⁴

When we begin to feel familiar with those we date, there is a tendency to continue pushing the line of familiarity further and further. Soon holding hands isn’t as fun, and a quick kiss gets old; it doesn’t take long before passionate kissing (making out) becomes the norm—and deeper sin ensues. President Spencer W. Kimball taught: “A vicious, destructive, social pattern of early steady dating must be changed. . . . *The change of this one pattern of social activities of our youth would immediately eliminate a majority of the sins of our young folks.*”⁵

IF YOU THINK YOU CAN HANDLE THE TEMPTATION . . . THINK AGAIN



“Dr. Phil . . . aired a program in which he staged an experiment to demonstrate the [temptation and] danger of guns in the home. Amid a group of playing little girls and boys, a teacher placed two fake guns inside a dollhouse. *The teacher warned the kids not to play with the guns*, and then left the room. The boys promptly began playing with the guns. Dr. Phil came in, *warned the boys again*, and after eliciting a promise not to play with the guns, which he put on a table, he left the room. Again, the boys promptly began playing with the guns.”⁶

One moral of the experiment is that it is better to avoid the temptation than to resist the sin. When it comes to steady dating in high school, it is better to just not start.

BUT WE’RE GOOD KIDS!

Some may think, “But we’re not like that. We are both active and have high standards!” President Spencer W. Kimball taught, “The devil knows how to destroy our young girls and boys. He may not be able to tempt a person to murder or to commit adultery immediately, but he knows that if he can get a boy and a girl to sit in the car late enough after the dance, or to park long enough in the dark at the end of the lane, *the best boy and the best girl will finally succumb and fall*. He knows that all have a limit to their resistance.”⁷



The Emotional Rollercoaster

Another reason why we should not steady date in high school is that we are not emotionally ready to handle serious relationships in our teens. Evidence of emotional instability in the teen years is supported by the fact that problems such as anorexia, bulimia, suicide, and self-hurting (cutting), are higher among teens than for any other group of people. Research says teenagers are the least stable with their self-identity and are the most susceptible to peer influence than any other age group.⁸