

A COVENANT WITNESS TO YOUNG PEOPLE

WHAT DOES YAHWEH SAY ABOUT SEXUAL INTIMACY?

A Torah Study for Teenagers and Young Adults

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Authority: The Tanakh — The Written Torah of **Yahweh** Alone

Evidentiary Standard: Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15

Elder Kepha Arcemont, Founder

EVIDENTIARY STANDARD — DEVARIM (DEUTERONOMY) 19:15

"A single witness shall not testify against any person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established."

All conclusions in this document are established by a minimum of two independent witnesses drawn from the Tanakh text, Hebrew lexicography, and corroborated historical record.

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INTRODUCTION: A DIRECT WORD TO YOU

This document is written for you — not about you. If you are between the ages of thirteen and twenty-four, this covenant study is addressed directly to you, with respect, with honesty, and with the full weight of **Yahweh's** own instruction. We will not talk down to you. We will not use fear tactics, shame language, or empty moralizing. We will open the Torah — the written covenant of **Yahweh (יהוה)** — and let His words speak for themselves.

The world you are growing up in is saturated with sexual messaging — in music, social media, advertising, television, and peer culture. The cultural pressure to have sex before any covenant commitment is, in

2026, nearly impossible to escape. And yet the Creator of human sexuality — **Yahweh Elohim** — has spoken clearly, precisely, and lovingly on this subject in His Torah. He designed the human body. He designed sexual intimacy. He designed the conditions under which it is meant to be experienced. And He documented His design in the Tanakh — in Hebrew — with a precision that no cultural trend, no popular opinion, and no peer pressure can alter.

We also bring before you a sobering set of facts from the United States Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). These are not opinions. They are public health data — and they represent the measurable, documented cost of a generation that has largely abandoned **Yahweh's** covenant design for sexual intimacy.

THE PUBLIC HEALTH RECORD — WHAT THE DATA REVEALS

Youth aged 15–24 account for approximately half of all new sexually transmitted infections in the United States annually — roughly 10 million of 20 million new cases — despite representing only 25% of the sexually active population. The most common infections among teenagers are HPV and chlamydia, and approximately **1 in 4 sexually active adolescent females is estimated to have an STI**. In 2023, young people ages 15–24 accounted for 48% of all reported chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis cases nationwide. Condom use among sexually active high school students declined from 60% in 2011 to 52% in 2021. Despite these infection rates, only about 20% of sexually active high school students report being tested in the past year.

These numbers are not random. They are a consequence. They represent the predictable, documented outcome of sexual activity outside the covenant framework that **Yahweh** designed. We do not use these numbers to shame. We use them as a witness — because **Yahweh** warned that breaking covenant design carries consequences in the body, in relationships, and in the community. The data is a modern confirmation of ancient covenant truth.

PART I — YAHWEH DESIGNED SEXUAL INTIMACY: THE CREATION FOUNDATION

Sexual intimacy is not a human invention, a cultural tradition, or a biological accident. It was designed by Yahweh Elohim at the moment of creation. Before any civilization, before any religious institution, before any law code — **Yahweh** built sexual union into the architecture of humanity. And He documented why, and under what conditions, in Bereishit (Genesis) chapters 1 and 2.

Bereishit (Genesis) 1:27 — "So Elohim created man in His own image; in the image of Elohim He created him; male and female He created them."

The Hebrew word for *image* is *tselem* (צלם) — H6754. BDB: "image, likeness" — used of a physical representation that carries the identity and authority of the original. The male and the female together constitute the full imaging of **Elohim** in the earth. This is the foundation of human dignity: every young

person reading this document — regardless of whether they have been told this by their family, their school, or their community — bears the image of the Creator of the universe.

That image — *tselem Elohim* — is what is at stake in every sexual decision you make.

Bereishit (Genesis) 2:18 — "And Yahweh Elohim said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper corresponding to him."

The Hebrew phrase is *ezer kenegdo* (עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ) — H5828 + H5048. BDB defines *ezer* as "one who helps" — the same word used of **Yahweh** Himself as Israel's helper in Tehillim (Psalms) 121:2. This is not a subordinate word. It is a word of covenant partnership. *Kenegdo* means "corresponding to him, his counterpart, his equal and complement." HALOT: "a helper who is his counterpart." The woman was not designed as a servant — she was designed as a covenant partner. And **Yahweh** designed this partnership BEFORE commanding any sexual union.

Bereishit (Genesis) 2:23–24 — "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh... Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

Three Hebrew words anchor everything that follows in this study. First: *davaq* (דָּבַק) — H1692 — "to cleave, cling, adhere." HALOT: "to form an unbreakable bond." This is the same verb used in Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:4 of Israel's covenant adhesion to **Yahweh** Himself. The bond of husband and wife mirrors the bond between **Yahweh** and His people.

Second: *basar echad* (בָּשָׂר אֶחָד) — "one flesh." The word *echad* (H259) is the same word used in the Shema of Devarim 6:4 — "**Yahweh is One.**" The unity of husband and wife is architecturally patterned on the unity of **Yahweh** Himself. This is not poetry. This is covenant architecture.

This means: sexual intercourse, in the Torah's framework, is not a recreational activity. It is a covenant act — an act that creates a spiritual, physical, and relational bond that mirrors the covenant between Yahweh and Israel. When a young person engages in sexual intercourse, something happens that **Yahweh** designed to be permanent. The Hebrew word *davaq* does not describe a temporary connection. It describes an unbreakable adhesion.

PART II — HEBREW LEXICAL STUDY: THE VOCABULARY OF COVENANT SEXUALITY

KEY HEBREW TERMS YAHWEH USES IN HIS COVENANT SEXUAL LAW

HEBREW TERM	MEANING AND COVENANT SIGNIFICANCE
<i>zanah</i> (זָנָה) H2181	To play the harlot, to fornicate, to engage in sexual activity outside covenant marriage. BDB: "to commit fornication, be a harlot." Used over 60 times in the Tanakh. Yahweh uses this word to describe both literal sexual immorality and Israel's spiritual unfaithfulness to the covenant. The two are never separated.

<p>zenut (זְנוּת) H2184</p>	<p>Fornication, sexual immorality in the abstract. The noun form of zarah. Used in Vayikra 19:29; Bemidbar 14:33; Yechezkel 16:15. Always carries covenantal weight — it is not merely a personal behavior but a covenant breach.</p>
<p>na'af (נָאַף) H5003</p>	<p>To commit adultery — sexual intercourse with a person who is under covenant to another. BDB: "to commit adultery." This is the root of the Seventh Commandment (Shemot 20:14). In the Tanakh's covenant law, adultery is treated as one of the gravest covenant violations — it destroys the basar echad bond that mirrors the Yahweh-Israel covenant.</p>
<p>betulah (בְּתוּלָה) H1330</p>	<p>Virgin, maiden. BDB: "virgin." Used throughout the Torah and Nevi'im. The Tanakh explicitly values and protects the betulah — Yahweh's covenant law in Devarim 22 establishes legal protection for a young woman's sexual purity before marriage. This word appears in Vayikra 21:13-14 (the standard for the High Priest's wife) as the highest expression of covenant purity.</p>
<p>mohar (מֹהָר) H4119</p>	<p>Bride price, the covenant payment given by a man to a woman's family at betrothal. Shemot 22:16-17 establishes that even in the case of a man who lies with a virgin who is not betrothed, he must pay the full mohar and marry her. The Torah's consistent framework: the sexual act has covenant consequences and covenant responsibilities — period.</p>
<p>qedeshah (קִדְשָׁה) H6948</p>	<p>Cult prostitute. Devarim 23:17 forbids both male (qadesh) and female (qedeshah) cult prostitution absolutely. No daughter of Israel shall be a cult prostitute. This prohibition, combined with the zarah prohibition, closes every loophole: no sexual expression outside covenant marriage is permitted in Yahweh's Torah.</p>
<p>niv'lah (נִבְלָה) H5039</p>	<p>Folly, disgrace, an outrage. Specifically used in Devarim 22:21 for a young woman who engaged in sexual immorality: "because she has done folly in Israel by playing the harlot in her father's house." The Torah frames pre-covenant sexual activity as a specific category of communal covenant breach — it is not merely a private matter.</p>

THE COMMANDMENT: LO TINAF — YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY

Shemot (Exodus) 20:14 — "You shall not commit adultery."

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 5:18 — "And you shall not commit adultery."

The Hebrew is **lo tinaf (לֹא תִנְאַף)** — **H5003** — "you shall not commit adultery." This commandment appears twice in the two restatements of the covenant law — a double witness by the Devarim 19:15 standard — establishing it as foundational covenant law. **This commandment does not merely prohibit adultery in the narrow modern sense. In its full Torah context, it protects the sanctity**

of basar echad — the "one flesh" covenant bond that Yahweh designed. Any sexual union outside that covenant bond violates the principle lo tinaf establishes.

PART III — WHAT YAHWEH SAYS DIRECTLY TO YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE TANAKH

VAYIKRA 18 — THE COVENANT SEXUAL CODE

Vayikra (Leviticus) chapter 18 is the most comprehensive covenant sexual law chapter in the entire Tanakh. Before listing specific prohibitions, **Yahweh** gives the reason framework — and it applies directly to you as a young person:

Vayikra (Leviticus) 18:2–5 — "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them: I am Yahweh your Elohim. You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you. You shall not walk in their statutes. You shall follow My rules and keep My statutes and walk in them. I am Yahweh your Elohim. You shall therefore keep My statutes and My rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am Yahweh."

"**I am Yahweh your Elohim**" — repeated twice in the opening. This is not an abstract deity giving abstract rules. This is the Creator of human sexuality establishing Himself as the source and authority of the sexual covenant framework. The repetition of *Ani Yahweh Eloheichem* ("I am **Yahweh** your **Elohim**") is a signature — this is personal covenant authority speaking.

The sexual prohibitions in Vayikra 18 then follow: incest in all forms (vv. 6–17), sex with a woman in her impurity without covenant preparation (v. 19), adultery (v. 20), Molek child sacrifice tied to sexual immorality (v. 21), male homosexual intercourse (v. 22), and bestiality (v. 23). **The chapter closes with the reason these laws exist** — not arbitrary prohibition, but covenant protection of the land and of the people (vv. 24–30).

Vayikra (Leviticus) 18:24–25 — "Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean, and the land became unclean, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants."

The Tanakh's framework is ecological and covenantal: sexual immorality is not a victimless private act. It defiles the land and the community. Young person — your sexual decisions are not only about you. They carry weight for your household, your community, and the covenant witness of **Yahweh** in the earth.

MISHLEI 5, 6, AND 7 — WISDOM'S WARNING TO EVERY YOUNG PERSON

Mishlei (Proverbs) chapters 5, 6, and 7 contain **Yahweh's** most direct, extended, and personal addresses to young people on the topic of sexual temptation and its consequences. They read like a parent sitting down face-to-face with a child:

Mishlei (Proverbs) 5:1–4 — "My son, be attentive to my wisdom; incline your ear to my understanding, that you may keep discretion, and your lips may guard knowledge. For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil, but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword."

Notice the Hebrew structure: *binah* (בִּינָה) — understanding — is the tool that protects you. The temptation to sexual activity outside covenant is described as something that **sounds and feels good in the moment** — "lips that drip honey," "speech smoother than oil" — but ends in **bitterness and destruction**. This is wisdom speaking, not legalism. **Yahweh** is not trying to keep you from pleasure. He is trying to keep you from the counterfeit that destroys you.

Mishlei (Proverbs) 5:15–19 — "Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well... Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love."

Yahweh endorses sexual delight — within covenant marriage. This text is not shy, clinical, or antiseptic. The Torah affirms sexual pleasure as a **Yahweh**-designed gift. The key is the covenant framework: "your own well," "the wife of your youth," "her love." **The gift of sexual intimacy was not designed to be sampled before the covenant is cut — it was designed to be the treasure of the covenant itself.**

Mishlei (Proverbs) 7:6–7, 24–27 — "At the window of my house I looked out through my lattice, and I saw among the simple, I perceived among the youths, a young man lacking sense... And now, O sons, listen to me, and be attentive to the words of my mouth. Let not your heart turn aside to her ways; do not stray into her paths, for many a victim has she laid low, and all her slain are a mighty throng. Her house is the way to Sheol, going down to the chambers of death."

The Hebrew word translated "simple" is *peti* (פֶּתִי) — **H6612** — "naive, inexperienced, open to being led astray." This is not an insult. It is an honest description of youth before wisdom has been built. **Yahweh's** warning in Mishlei 7 is urgent because the young person lacks the experiential wisdom to see where the seduction leads. That is precisely why **Yahweh** placed the warning in writing — so that you can receive the wisdom now, before the experience of destruction.

DEVARIM 22 — THE TORAH'S COVENANT PROTECTION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S SEXUAL PURITY

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 22:13–29 contains the Torah's most detailed legal framework addressing sexual purity for young men and women before and within the covenant of marriage. Several key principles emerge directly applicable to teenagers:

DEVARIM 22 PASSAGE	COVENANT PRINCIPLE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
Vv. 13–21 — Proof of virginity	Yahweh's covenant law treated a young woman's sexual purity before marriage as a matter of covenant honor — protected by law. The

	community and the parents bore responsibility for the daughter. Her purity was not merely personal; it was a covenant testimony.
Vv. 22 — Adultery	"If a man is found lying with the wife of another man, both of them shall die." The severity of this consequence witnesses to how seriously Yahweh treats the violation of basar echad — the one-flesh covenant bond.
Vv. 23–24 — Betrothed virgin in city	If a betrothed woman did not cry out when violated in the city, it was treated as consensual. If she cried out and was not heard, the man alone bore guilt. Yahweh's Torah distinguishes between consent and coercion — consent matters covenantally.
Vv. 25–27 — Betrothed virgin in field (rape)	If a betrothed woman was overpowered in the field and cried out — the man alone was executed. The woman bore no guilt. Yahweh's Torah is explicit: coerced sexual contact is never the victim's covenant violation.
Vv. 28–29 — Unbetrothed virgin	If a man lay with an unbetrothed virgin, he must pay the full mohar, marry her, and may never divorce her all his days. Yahweh's Torah attaches permanent, lifelong covenant responsibility to the sexual act — even in cases outside formal betrothal.

The consistent principle across every scenario in Devarim 22: **sexual intercourse creates covenant obligations. There is no provision in the Torah for casual, commitment-free sexual activity.** Every scenario attaches responsibility, consequence, and covenant weight to the act. This was not cultural — it was **Yahweh's** own design.

PART IV — SHOULD TEENAGERS BE HAVING SEX? THE COVENANT VERDICT

This is the direct question the document was written to answer. And **Yahweh's** Torah answers it without ambiguity.

THE COVENANT ANSWER: NO — NOT OUTSIDE COVENANT MARRIAGE.

The Torah establishes no provision, no exception, and no permission for sexual intercourse outside the covenant of marriage. Yahweh designed sexual intimacy as the exclusive expression and seal of the marriage covenant — basar echad, the "one flesh" union. To engage in sexual intercourse outside that covenant is, by Yahweh's own definition in His Torah, *zanah* — fornication — a covenant breach.

The question is not primarily about age — it is about covenant. The Torah does not contain a specific "minimum age" provision for marriage or sexual activity in modern terms. What it contains is a **covenant framework**: sexual intercourse belongs exclusively within the covenant of marriage (*karat brit* — the

death-bound oath between husband and wife before **Yahweh**). In the ancient covenant culture of the Tanakh, young men and women were often betrothed and married in their mid-to-late teen years — but the critical point is that **the covenant preceded the union. Always.**

In modern Western civilization, the cultural and legal frameworks surrounding marriage, adulthood, and consent have shifted significantly. A teenager in 2026 is not in the same social position as a young person in ancient Israel approaching a formal covenant betrothal. Today, teenagers are:

- **Biologically developing** but emotionally, legally, and financially not yet established in independent covenant responsibility.
- **Under parental/guardian covenant authority** — the Torah framework consistently places young unmarried persons under the household covenant structure.
- **Not yet in position to fulfill** the full covenant obligations the Torah attaches to the sexual act: the mohar commitment, the lifelong covenant bond, the household responsibility.
- **Particularly vulnerable** to the physical consequences the CDC data documents — STIs, emotional damage, disrupted educational and professional trajectories.

Yahweh's covenant design is not a burden — it is a protection architecture. The requirement that sexual intimacy be reserved for covenant marriage is not arbitrary restriction. It is **Yahweh** protecting His image-bearers from precisely the damage the public health data now documents at epidemic scale.

WITNESS 1: MISHLEI 6:32 — THE SELF-DESTRUCTION OF SEXUAL IMMORALITY

Mishlei (Proverbs) 6:32 — "He who commits adultery lacks sense; he who does it destroys himself."

The Hebrew for "lacks sense" is *chasar lev* (חסר-לב) — literally "lacking heart" — BDB: "without understanding, senseless." The word for "destroys" is *yashchit* (ישחית) — H7843 — "to corrupt, destroy, ruin." This is not hypothetical. **Yahweh** witnesses: the one who violates the covenant sexual framework destroys himself. Not someone else destroys him — he destroys himself. This is covenant self-destruction.

WITNESS 2: VAYIKRA 19:29 — THE COVENANT WARNING AGAINST PROFANING THE DAUGHTER

Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:29 — "Do not profane your daughter by making her a prostitute, lest the land fall into prostitution and the land become full of depravity."

The word "profane" is *chalal* (חלל) — H2490 — BDB: "to profane, defile, pollute, desecrate." This command is addressed to parents — specifically to fathers — but it establishes the covenant principle: a young woman's body is not to be used for sexual commerce or casualness. The land fills with *zimah* (H2154 — lewdness, depravity) when the covenant sexual standard is abandoned. Two witnesses: Mishlei 6:32 + Vayikra 19:29. The Devarim 19:15 standard is met.

WITNESS 3: SHIR HASHIRIM — THE COVENANT STANDARD OF GUARDING LOVE

Shir HaShirim (Song of Songs) 2:7 — "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the does of the field, that you not stir up or awaken love until it pleases."

Yahweh included the Shir HaShirim (Song of Songs) in the Tanakh — a celebration of the beauty and passion of covenant love. And within that same book of love poetry, **Yahweh** places this three-times-repeated covenant charge (2:7; 3:5; 8:4): *al ta'iru ve'al te'oreru et ha'ahavah* — "do not stir up or awaken love until it pleases." The Hebrew *tachpotz* — "until it pleases" — refers to the appointed time, the right season, the covenant moment. Love — including its physical expression — has a designed time and context. Sexual intimacy awakened before its covenant season causes damage to the soul. This is not an ancient opinion. It is a covenant design principle.

PART V — THE PILEGESH AND THE GIRLFRIEND: WHAT THE TORAH SAYS ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS SHORT OF MARRIAGE

One of the most important questions a young person can bring to this covenant study is this: "**What about a committed relationship? What if we're serious about each other? Isn't that different from casual sex?**" This is a fair and honest question — and the Torah answers it directly through the institution of the *pilegesh*, the concubine. Understanding what that relationship actually was — and was not — tells teenagers everything they need to know about how **Yahweh** measures a "committed relationship."

WHAT IS A PILEGESH? — THE HEBREW LEXICAL FOUNDATION

HEBREW TERM	DEFINITION AND COVENANT SIGNIFICANCE
pilegesh (פִּילְגֶשֶׁת) H6370	Concubine, secondary wife. BDB: 'a concubine, a woman living with a man in a secondary but recognized marital status within the household.' HALOT: 'concubine — a woman cohabiting with a man in a legally recognized but secondary status.' The pilegesh was NOT a casual partner, a girlfriend, or a temporary sexual arrangement. She was a recognized member of the household with covenant accountability on both sides.
Tanakh Examples	Avraham and Keturah (Bereishit 25:6; called both wife and concubine). Ya'akov, Bilhah, and Zilpah (Bereishit 30 — their sons became tribal patriarchs). Gideon's concubine (Shoftim 8:31 — bore Avimelech). The Levite and his concubine (Shoftim 19 — her breach of the relationship is called zanah, confirming covenant accountability). Ritzpah bat Ayah, Shaul's concubine (Shmuel Bet 3:7; 21:10-11 — her faithfulness to

	Shaul's sons is honored). David's concubines (Shmuel Bet 5:13; 15:16). Shlomo's three hundred concubines (Melachim Aleph 11:3).
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The *pilegesh* was the **lowest recognized category of covenant sexual relationship in the entire Tanakh** — meaning it was the minimum threshold below which sexual intimacy was not recognized as legitimate by **Yahweh's** covenant structure. Even at this minimum level, the relationship had four non-negotiable covenant characteristics that define it completely differently from a modern dating relationship.

THE FOUR COVENANT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PILEGESH RELATIONSHIP

COVENANT CHARACTERISTIC	WHAT IT MEANS — AND WHAT IT IS NOT
1. Exclusivity	The pilegesh belonged to one man and one man only. She was not dating multiple people. She was not keeping her options open. She was not in a relationship that could be dissolved by a simple conversation. Her covenant faithfulness was legally binding — when the Levite's concubine committed zarah against him (Shoftim 19:2), her breach was treated as a serious covenant violation, not a personal choice.
2. Household Presence	The pilegesh lived in the man's household. She was under his roof, his protection, and his covenant authority. This is not a relationship conducted through text messages and occasional visits. It was a full household commitment recognized by family, community, and the covenant legal system.
3. Covenant Accountability	Both parties were accountable. Her unfaithfulness was zarah — fornication and covenant breach. His abandonment of her had consequences (the Levite story in Shoftim 19 shows the catastrophic community consequences of a man mishandling his covenant relationship with his concubine). The relationship had weight, standing, and legal recognition.
4. Community Recognition	The pilegesh relationship was known publicly. It was not hidden. It was not private. The community, the extended family, and the covenant structure knew of and recognized the relationship. There was no ambiguity about their status.

THE MODERN GIRLFRIEND/BOYFRIEND RELATIONSHIP — A TORAH ASSESSMENT

Now measure the modern Western "committed relationship" — boyfriend and girlfriend, or even a long-term partner — against the four pilegish standards. Ask honestly: Does the modern dating relationship meet even the **minimum** covenant threshold that **Yahweh** established for the pilegish?

PILEGESH STANDARD	MODERN GIRLFRIEND/BOYFRIEND	TORAH VERDICT
Exclusivity	Often present in intent — but with no covenant structure, exclusivity is maintained only by goodwill, not covenant obligation. Either party can leave at any time with no legal or covenant consequence.	Partial at best. Exclusivity of feeling is not exclusivity of covenant. The Torah requires covenant accountability, not just personal intention.
Household Presence	Absent in virtually all cases. The couple maintains separate residences, separate finances, and separate covenant authority structures. They visit each other.	Not met. Living separately while dating is not a household covenant relationship by any Torah standard.
Covenant Accountability	Absent. Breaking up — even after years of sexual intimacy — carries no legal, community, or covenant consequence. There is no framework that holds either party to the relationship.	Not met. A relationship that can be dissolved instantly with no covenant consequence does not meet the pilegish standard.
Community Recognition	Often vague. "We're together" — but what does that mean legally? Covenantally? In terms of family obligation? The community, extended family, and legal system may have no formal knowledge of or role in the relationship.	Not met. Yahweh's covenant sexual framework always operates within recognized community and family accountability.

The conclusion is direct: the modern girlfriend/boyfriend relationship does not meet even the minimum covenant sexual standard established by the pilegish institution in the Tanakh. A dating relationship — however sincere, however exclusive in intention, however emotionally serious — is not a recognized covenant sexual relationship. Sexual activity within that framework is therefore *zanab* — fornication — by **Yahweh's** own definition, regardless of how the culture defines it or how seriously the couple feels about each other.

ON MONOGAMY — WHAT THE TORAH ACTUALLY TEACHES

Most teenagers are taught — in homes, in churches, in mosques, and in synagogues — that **monogamy is the only legitimate relationship structure between a man and a woman.** This teaching is widespread across all three Abrahamic traditions. It is worth examining honestly against the Torah,

because a teenager who discovers the Torah's actual record on this question may feel the ground shift beneath them.

The honest Torah answer: the Torah does not command exclusive monogamy as the only permitted marriage structure. Avraham had a primary wife (Sarah) and a concubine (Hagar/Keturah). Ya'akov had four women — Leah, Rachel, Bilhah, and Zilpah — and twelve sons became the tribes of Israel. David had multiple wives and concubines. Shlomo had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines (though his excess is explicitly condemned in Melachim Aleph 11). The Torah does not prohibit plural marriage — it regulates it with covenant responsibility standards (Shemot 21:10 — the rights of wives must be maintained; Devarim 17:17 — the king shall not multiply wives to excess).

However — and this is the critical point for every young person — **the Torah's permission for plural covenant relationships does not open a door for sexual activity outside the covenant framework.** The Torah permits a man to have more than one wife or concubine within recognized covenant structures. It does not permit any man or woman to have sexual relationships outside those structures. The question the Torah asks is not "how many partners?" — it is "are those partners within recognized covenant structures?"

This means the cultural teaching that "monogamy is the only option" is actually **correct in its practical application for most people** — the vast majority of people today will and should enter a single marriage covenant. But it is often applied incorrectly when teenagers use it to justify their relationships: **"I'm only with one person" does not make the relationship a covenant.** Exclusivity of feeling is not exclusivity of covenant. Having one girlfriend and sleeping with her is still *zanah* — because the issue is not the number of partners. The issue is whether the relationship is a recognized covenant structure before **Yahweh** and the community. It is not.

The practical bottom line for every teenager: Whether the culture teaches monogamy or not, and whether the Torah permits plural marriage or not — the question that determines whether your sexual relationship is within **Yahweh's** covenant design is this: **Is this relationship a recognized covenant before Yahweh, your family, and your community — with the full weight of commitment, accountability, household, and exclusivity that the covenant of marriage carries?** If the answer is no — if it is a dating relationship, a girlfriend, a boyfriend, a "situation," a "talking to" someone — then sexual activity within it does not meet even the pilegish standard. It is *zanah*. And **Yahweh's** Torah calls you to something better.

PART VI — THE COVENANT RESPONSIBILITIES BEHIND THE SEXUAL ACT

The Torah is not only a system of prohibitions. It is a covenant design manual — and it documents the full weight of responsibility that **Yahweh** attaches to sexual intercourse. Every young person who is considering, or has already engaged in, sexual activity needs to understand what **Yahweh's** Torah says the act carries.

THE RESPONSIBILITY	WHAT THE TORAH ESTABLISHES	THE KEY TEXT
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Covenant Bond	Sexual intercourse creates a basar echad — one flesh — bond between the two persons. This bond is not terminated by walking away. It was designed to be permanent, mirroring the Yahweh-Israel covenant.	Bereishit 2:24; Malachi 2:14
Covenant Faithfulness	The Torah requires exclusive sexual faithfulness within the marriage covenant. The seventh commandment (lo tinaf) protects the integrity of the bond. Violation of this bond is treated by Yahweh as one of the gravest covenant breaches.	Shemot 20:14; Devarim 5:18; Mishlei 6:32
Parental / Household Responsibility	Young unmarried persons are under the covenant authority of their father's household. The Torah places specific legal and covenant responsibility on the father regarding the sexual purity of his unmarried daughter.	Devarim 22:13–21; Vayikra 19:29
Financial Covenant Obligation	A man who lies with a virgin outside betrothal owes the full mohar — the bride price — to her father, whether or not the father permits the marriage. The sexual act carries financial covenant obligation in Yahweh's Torah.	Shemot 22:16–17; Devarim 22:28–29
Potential Offspring	The sexual act is the only mechanism Yahweh designed for human reproduction. Every act of intercourse carries the possibility of a child. Yahweh's Torah treats children as covenant gifts and assigns full parental responsibility to both mother and father.	Bereishit 1:28; Tehillim 127:3
Community Witness	Sexual immorality is not a private matter in the Torah framework. Zarah defiles the covenant witness of the community and the land. The Torah treats the sexual behavior of its members as having communal covenant consequences.	Vayikra 18:24–25; Devarim 22:21
Personal Spiritual Integrity	The body that bears the tselem Elohim — the image of Elohim — is the vessel of covenant testimony. Sexual	Vayikra 11:44; 19:2; 20:7–8

	immorality violates that vessel. Yahweh calls His people to kedushah — holiness — which is directly tied to sexual covenant faithfulness.	
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Young person: **none of these responsibilities disappear because you are a teenager, because you are in love, because you have been together for a long time, because everyone else is doing it, because no one will find out, or because the culture tells you it is normal.** The Torah does not contain an exception clause for youth. It contains a protection framework precisely designed for the season of youth: reserve the act for the covenant, and the act will serve you as **Yahweh** designed it to serve you.

PART VII — THREE-RELIGION COVENANT AUDIT

This study is addressed to every young person who traces covenant heritage to Judaism, Christianity, or Islam. On the question of sexual purity before marriage, all three traditions — when measured against their foundational texts rather than their cultural practices — agree with the Tanakh standard:

PRINCIPLE	JUDAISM (TANAKH / HALACHA)	CHRISTIANITY (DRAWING FROM TANAKH)	ISLAM (DRAWING FROM TORAH / QURAN)
Sexual intercourse outside marriage	Prohibited as zenut (fornication). The Torah is unambiguous. Rabbinic law (halacha) affirms and extends the prohibition.	Prohibited throughout the Tanakh from which Christianity draws. The Greek word porneia (sexual immorality) in NT texts reflects the Hebrew zenut/zanah concept.	Prohibited as zina (زنا) — the Arabic cognate of the Hebrew zenut. The Quran (Surah 17:32) states: 'Do not approach zina; it is an indecency and an evil way.'
Marriage as covenant	Kiddushin (sanctification/betrothal) and nissuin (marriage) are covenant ceremonies. The Talmud and halacha affirm the Torah's covenant marriage structure.	Marriage rooted in Bereishit 2:24 (one flesh). All orthodox and traditional streams affirm marriage as the exclusive context for sexual intimacy.	Nikah (نكاح) is the covenant of marriage in Islam — a formal contract before witnesses. Sexual intimacy is exclusively permitted within nikah.
Consequence of sexual immorality	Spiritual defilement, community damage, covenant breach. Torah prescribes serious consequences for zenut in the community.	Spiritual damage, community testimony harmed, violation of the Creator's design for the body as a covenant vessel.	Zina is treated as one of the gravest moral violations in Islamic law. The Quran attaches serious consequence to it precisely because it

			violates the covenant sexual design.
Protection of youth	The father's household bears covenant responsibility for the unmarried daughter (Devarim 22; Vayikra 19:29). Community structures protect young people.	Same Tanakh foundation applies. Young people are called to covenant purity — guarding the body as a temple of Yahweh's image.	Islamic law explicitly protects young people through the marriage covenant structure and the prohibition of zina. Early marriage within covenant is affirmed over sexual immorality.

The three-religion audit witnesses: **the prohibition of sexual activity outside covenant marriage is not the private opinion of one religious sect. It is the testimony of the foundational covenant documents of every major Abrahamic tradition, rooted in the written Torah of Yahweh.**

PART VIII — A COVENANT WORD TO THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY BEEN SEXUALLY ACTIVE

If you have already engaged in sexual activity, this section is written specifically for you — with the same love, respect, and covenant authority as everything that came before it.

Yahweh's Torah does not designate you as permanently disqualified, broken beyond repair, or outside the reach of the covenant. The Tanakh contains within it the concept of *teshuvah* (תשובה) — **H7725** — from the root *shuv*, "to turn, to return." It is the Torah's concept of covenant return — not merely religious regret, but a genuine turning back toward **Yahweh's** covenant design.

Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 3:22 — "Return, O faithless children; I will heal your faithlessness."

Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 18:30–32 — "Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit!... For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares Yahweh Elohim; so turn, and live."

Yahweh says: turn. Return. The covenant path forward is not self-condemnation — it is teshuvah followed by covenant commitment. The young person who has been sexually active can, in this moment, choose to:

- **Stop the activity** outside of covenant commitment.
- **Seek medical care** — get tested for STIs, as all 50 U.S. states permit minors to consent to their own STI testing and treatment without parental notification.
- **Pursue honest conversation** with a trusted parent, elder, or covenant community member.
- **Commit to covenant design** going forward — waiting for the covenant of marriage before resuming sexual activity.

- **Know that the teshuvah is real** — Yahweh's covenant does not close to those who turn back toward it.

The damage done by sexual activity outside the covenant is real — and the CDC data documents the physical dimension of that damage. But **Yahweh** is also the **Rofeh (רפא)** — the Healer — and the covenant path of return is open. The question is whether you are willing to turn.

PART IX — COVENANT VERDICT AND CALL

This study has established, by a minimum of two or three independent witnesses at every point, the covenant position of **Yahweh (יהוה)** on the question of teenage sexual activity. The witnesses are drawn from the Tanakh, the Hebrew lexicon, the historical covenant record, and the contemporary public health record. They agree:

COVENANT VERDICT

- **Yahweh** designed sexual intimacy as a covenant act — not a recreational activity, a social norm, or a personal right exercised at will.
- Sexual intercourse outside the covenant of marriage is **zanab** — fornication — a covenant breach by **Yahweh's** own definition in His Torah.
- The physical consequences documented by the CDC are a modern confirmation of ancient covenant truth: breaking **Yahweh's** sexual design carries measurable, documented damage.
- Young people operating under parental/guardian covenant authority and who have not yet entered the covenant of marriage are under **Yahweh's** design for sexual restraint — full stop.
- The act of sexual intercourse carries permanent covenant responsibilities that no teenager — or adult — can escape: the bond, the potential offspring, the community witness, the covenant account before **Yahweh**.
- For those who have already been sexually active: teshuvah — covenant return — is real. **Yahweh's** door is open. But it requires a genuine turning, not a continued casualness toward His covenant design.

To every young person reading this: **Yahweh** is not against your sexuality. He designed it. He celebrated it in the Shir HaShirim. He built it into the architecture of **tselem Elohim** — the image of **Elohim** in the earth. He is against the counterfeits — the cheap, covenant-free, consequence-laden substitutes that the culture has offered you in place of the real thing. The real thing is worth waiting for. The covenant is worth entering. The **basar echad** — the "one flesh" union — in its proper covenant home is one of the most profound experiences **Yahweh** designed for human life.

The covenant call to you is this: Honor the Designer of your body. Honor the covenant He established. Wait for the marriage covenant. Walk in the kedushah — the holiness — that

Yahweh assigned to your body as a bearer of His image. And if you have already walked outside that design, turn — teshuvah — and walk back toward it.

Yahweh is watching. And He is a covenant Keeper — to those who return to His covenant design.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, PARENTS, AND EDUCATORS

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

- What does it mean that the sexual act creates a "one flesh" bond — and how does that change how you think about sexual activity outside of marriage?
- What does the CDC data tell you about what happens when Yahweh's covenant design for sexuality is abandoned? Does that surprise you? Why or why not?
- If Yahweh designed sexual pleasure as a gift — why did He design it for inside the covenant of marriage specifically, rather than making it available at any time?
- What does teshuvah — covenant return — mean to someone who has already been sexually active? What would it look like in your life?
- The culture says that sexual restraint is old-fashioned, repressive, and impossible. The Torah says it is a protection designed by the Creator of your body. Which source has more authority over your decisions? Why?

FOR PARENTS AND EDUCATORS

- The Torah places covenant responsibility for the sexual purity of unmarried daughters on the father's household. How does that translate into practical conversation, boundary-setting, and accountability in a modern family?
- Vayikra 19:29 says "do not profane your daughter." How does the cultural normalization of teenage sexual activity function as a form of communal profaning of young women? What is the covenant response?
- The CDC data shows that only 20% of sexually active teens get tested. How can parents and covenant communities create environments where young people feel safe seeking help after a covenant breach, rather than hiding it?
- Mishlei 7 describes the "peti" — the naive young person lacking wisdom — as the target of sexual seduction. How does Torah education build the "binah" (understanding) that protects young people before the seduction occurs?

SCRIPTURE INDEX

REFERENCE	HEBREW BOOK NAME	TOPIC
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1:27; 2:18–24	Bereishit (Genesis)	Tselem Elohim; ezer kenegdo; basar echad; davaq — creation foundation of sexual covenant
20:14	Shemot (Exodus)	Lo tinaf — You shall not commit adultery — 7th Commandment
22:16–17	Shemot (Exodus)	Mohar obligation when lying with unbetrothed virgin
18:1–30	Vayikra (Leviticus)	Comprehensive covenant sexual law code — full prohibitions framework
19:29	Vayikra (Leviticus)	Do not profane your daughter by making her a prostitute
20:7–8	Vayikra (Leviticus)	Kedushah — holiness of the body as covenant vessel
5:18	Devarim (Deuteronomy)	Lo tinaf restated — double witness for the Devarim 19:15 standard
22:13–29	Devarim (Deuteronomy)	Full covenant sexual law for young people — virginity, betrothal, rape, obligation
23:17	Devarim (Deuteronomy)	Prohibition of cult prostitution — no sexual expression outside covenant
5:1–23	Mishlei (Proverbs)	Wisdom's warning against sexual seduction; rejoice in covenant spouse
6:32	Mishlei (Proverbs)	He who commits adultery lacks sense — self-destruction witness
7:1–27	Mishlei (Proverbs)	The naive youth and the seduction — urgency of covenant wisdom
2:7; 3:5; 8:4	Shir HaShirim (Song of Songs)	Do not awaken love before its covenant time — three-witness charge
3:22	Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah)	Teshuvah — covenant return — Yahweh heals faithlessness
16:15–43	Yechezkel (Ezekiel)	Covenant unfaithfulness as zarah — the metaphor and its lesson
18:30–32	Yechezkel (Ezekiel)	Teshuvah call — turn and live — Yahweh has no pleasure in destruction
2:14	Malachi (Malachi)	Brit — covenant wife — marriage as covenant before Yahweh

*"Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well.
Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth."*

— MISHLEI (PROVERBS) 5:15, 18 —

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