

# Bullying

**Leviticus 19:18** *"You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord."*

It seems that nowadays whenever you turn on the news or open the newspaper, there is a prominent story about bullying. The relationships that teenagers and young adults have today with each other are becoming more and more toxic. 20 years ago if somebody was being bullied at school they had a relative safe zone at home where they could be away from the bullying. But now the bullying doesn't end with the end of the school day. Teens and young adults are tormented on Facebook, MySpace, twitter, and other interactive platforms. In a recent study by the Los Angeles-based Josephson Institute of ethics, half of the high school students in the United States say they've bullied someone in the past year, and nearly half say they've been the victim of bullying.

The study asked more than 43,000 high school students if they had been physically abused, teased or taunted in a way that seriously upset them. Forty-three percent said yes, and 50 percent confessed to actually being the one doing the bullying.

The study comes at a time of several high-profile suicides connected to bullying, including the suicide death of 15-year-old Phoebe Prince of Massachusetts, who prosecutors say was relentlessly bullied by the six girls charged in her death.

These numbers are extremely alarming to see printed in black-and-white. In the age of the Internet and cell phones bullying now can be done through text messaging and posting on someone's Facebook page. It is getting out of control and needs to be reined in at all costs.

## Group Discussion

1. Have you been bullied in the past year?
2. Have you bullied anybody in the past year?
3. What thoughts do you think a bully has when they are making fun of somebody or threatening someone?
4. What thoughts do you think the person that is being bullied has when they are being made fun of or threatened?
5. What can you do to stop an act of bullying? Who do you know that is being tormented at or out of school? How can you help this person?