

CRAZY LOVE

WALT MUELLER, CPYU President



YOUTH CULTURE HOT QUOTE

“I think the reason that the economic arguments Christ offered are not promoted is because they are deeply at odds with the way we live.”

Comedian, actor, and writer **Russell Brand**, discussing money, materialism and Christ's teachings in **Matthew 19**, *Relevant Magazine*, Jan/Feb 2018.



There was a father-son conversation that several times left me scratching my adolescent head. I kept coming back to my dad's words over the course of my teenage years for the simple reason that they were so contrary to my own teenage reality. I was so baffled by it all that I think I brought it up to my dad at least once a year.

It all started when I was about fourteen-years-old and my dad told me how much he loved my mom. “I love your mother more today than I did on the day I married her,” he said. Then, with each passing year, he would proclaim how much his love for her had increased in the prior twelve months. I couldn't figure it out.

In hindsight, I realize that my dad's words left my head spinning for the simple reason that my head was filled with horribly skewed notions of love and marriage. To that point in my life, my sole experience of what I thought at the time was *love* was really only *infatuation*. Infatuation is that intense passion for someone that kept my young self dreamy-eyed and wide awake at night. I couldn't get her out of my mind. . . *her* being any one from a constant parade of female peers, one after the other, who would make my legs wobbly whenever they'd come into view. There's a good reason why the dictionary defines *infatuation* as “short-lived.” That should have been my first clue that my dad was talking about something else.

And so I'd wonder, “My mom and dad are aging. Neither appear to be as physically attractive as they did in their wedding

picture. My dad's words don't make sense. Doesn't the feeling of love wane with age?”

In today's self-centered and appearance-obsessed world where beauty is only skin-deep, it's easy for our kids to not only make the same assumptions I did when I was their age, but to have those assumptions reinforced by a cultural narrative that rarely defines, understands, or experiences love correctly. What our kids desperately need is no different than what I needed: a radical verbal and visual demonstration of the true meaning of *love*, gifted to me by my parents.

Now that I've been married over 35 years, I look at my wife and know exactly what my dad was talking about.

Love is not a feeling. *Love* is a decision. In his book *The Meaning of Marriage*, Tim Keller writes, “In any relationship, there will be frightening spells in which your feelings of love dry up. And when that happens you must remember that the essence of marriage is that it is a covenant, a commitment, a promise of future love. . . As time goes on you will not only get through the dry spells, but they will become less frequent and deep, and you will become more constant in your feelings. This is what can happen if you decide to love.”

Parents, when you decide to love your spouse, you are also deciding to teach your kids what it means to love. And when you do that, you are setting up your own grandkids for a blessed life! ✨

Apparel Brands

Worldwide
Source:
BrandZ Top 100 Most Valuable Brands 2017



1. **Nike**
2. **Zara**
3. **H&M**
4. **Adidas**
5. **Uniqlo**
6. **Under Armour**
7. **Victoria's Secret**
8. **Lululemon**
9. **Ralph Lauren**
10. **Massimo Dutti**



QUICK STATS

Kids ages 4 to 14 received an average \$454 in allowance over the course of 2017.
(RoosterMoney)

The percentage of kids from 6-12 years old that play at least one team sport on a regular basis dropped from 41.5% in 2011 to 36.6% in 2016.
(State of Play 2017)

FROM THE NEWS:

FAKE NEWS

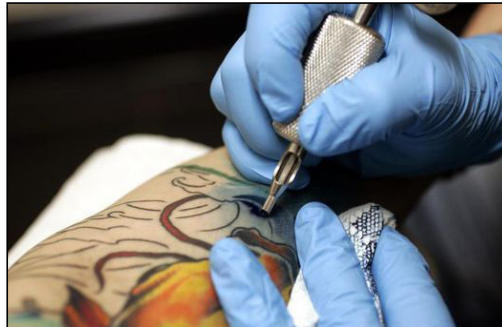
Living in a world where information comes at us at breakneck speed makes it almost impossible to know what to believe and what not to believe. This has been pounded home to us over the course of the last several months as we continually hear about fake news. As parents and youth workers, we teach our kids how to discern what is true from what is false. We must also communicate the truths of God's Word in ways that help them to walk the narrow road that leads to life, while avoiding the wide road that leads to destruction. The Apostle Paul uses the word "trustworthy" several times in his New Testament letters. In each case, his use of the word is in reference to a saying that is true, and that is to be completely accepted and believed. Are you searching the Scriptures in order to know the truth that is not only to be accepted and believed, but that gives life? Then, are you sharing that with your kids? How about taking the time to look at several of Paul's trustworthy sayings found in Scripture this month with your kids?

TRENDS: TATTOOS, PIERCINGS & STYLE

Tattoos, piercings, hair style, clothing. . . these are some of the things we tend to make into major conflict points in our families. For example, when generational styles collide, we tend to turn personal taste and style issues into moral issues in an effort to keep our kids from altering their appearance in ways that we either find embarrassing or wrong. Teens embrace their own unique styles that allow

them to individuate as a distinct group away from previous generations. If you don't believe it, just go back and leaf through your high school yearbook. No doubt, this is fertile ground for parent/teen conflict. On the one hand, these are issues and matters that we must address with our kids. But our first task is to discern the roots of the behaviors.

If their fascination with these things isn't symptomatic of a deeper heart issue, then we shouldn't prohibit things that the Scriptures don't prohibit or label as wrong. The old parenting cliché is worth remembering: "Major on the majors. . . not the minors."



LATEST RESEARCH: DEPRESSION

Researchers recently released the results of what is called the *Millennium Cohort Study*. The academic survey was conducted in the U.K. The findings on depression should concern us. By the age of 14, nine percent of boys are depressed. That's alarming enough. But

it's the numbers on our girls that are even more distressing. By the age of 14, 24% of our girls are depressed. While depression, anxiety, and mental illness have always been present in the teen population, the frequency and intensity have increased. As parents, we must not only teach our kids how to deal in healthy ways with these things, but how to prevent and avoid them. One strategy is to spend less time on social media. Comparing

ourselves to others leaves us feeling empty and consumed with trying to measure up. Our identity cannot be pursued and found in what others think of us. The path to mental and spiritual health begins with finding our identity in Christ.

CPYU'S
DIGITAL
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www.DigitalKidsInitiative.com

True Identity

by Walt Mueller



The presence of social media has radically changed not only the experience of adolescence, but adulthood as well. We are constantly bombarded with images telling us that we don't measure up to the appearance standards we see in the heavily-curated and doctored posts of others. Eventually, we come to believe the lie that our identity is found in our appearance and what others think of it.

In her book *Face Time*, Kristen Hatton tells us that our "standing before God does not change based on performance. You are secure in Christ – this is the source of your true identity. This truth is what enables you, no matter what you've done, to go confidently to His throne of grace for forgiveness and help, knowing that there is no end to God's love and mercy. The God who created you and redeemed you has set his love upon you. Nothing can provide a more secure identity than this. . . Another way to say this is that you find your identity by being wrapped up in His."

Are you living and teaching this to your kids?

New Podcast

Youth Culture Matters

is a long-format podcast from CPYU. Co-hosted by Walt Mueller and Jason Soucinek.



Listen at
www.cpyu.org/podcast.

Be sure to check out Episode 47 for an interview with Dr. Allen Jackson about the opioid epidemic and parenting addicts.

FROM THE WORD

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul tells his readers to ponder and value a variety of things, including “whatever is true.” Paul knows that our thinking about the truth will influence the way that we live in positive ways. Knowing the truth not only allows us to see and avoid embracing and following lies, but to grow in our faith and holiness.

One of the biggest lies we believe is the lie which tells us that “the grass is always greener on the other side.” We come to believe that if our circumstances were different our lives would be better. Counselor David Powlison reminds us that to flourish in life, we must reject all the lies containing the word *different*. For example, believing that our lives would improve drastically if we only had a *different* spouse or a *different* family. Powlison says that these statements are “fundamentally false.”

**“FINALLY, BROTHERS,
WHATEVER IS TRUE. . .
THINK ABOUT THESE
THINGS.”
PHILIPPIANS 4:8**

As you live through this month (February) where we are reminded to celebrate love, preach the truth of the Gospel to yourself. And rather than listening to the voice that would like you to forsake the relational gifts you’ve been given in favor of something that only *appears* to be better, remind yourself that God is control of His world and that He promises to show give you just what you need to navigate your circumstances and to decide to love your spouse and children well.

HELPFUL RESOURCE ←

Each installment in the “Just Add Parents” series addresses a topic of interest and need related to the pressures children and teens face in today’s youth culture.

The plug-and-play meeting features 3 ten-minute video teaching segments from CPYU’s Walt Mueller, each followed up with small group discussion. Perfect for use in a parent meeting or Sunday School class.

The teaching content is designed to not only inform parents regarding cultural issues, but equip them to respond to these unfolding contemporary realities in a Gospel-centered and God-honoring practical manner, all with the goal of helping parents lead their children and teens into believing and behaving “Christianly” in today’s rapidly changing youth culture.

The first installment, “Tech-Sensible Parenting” is available on a physical USB drive or as a digital download. Questions for small group discussion as well as supplemental articles and fact sheets are also included.



Available in the CPYU Resource Center at www.cpyu.org.



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