

Feelings vs. **Commitment**

WALT MUELLER, CPYU President



YOUTH CULTURE HOT QUOTE

“I don’t even believe in God, but I’m going to thank her tonight.”

Thandie Newton, after winning the outstanding supporting actress in a drama series award for her role in *Westworld*, at the Emmys, September 17, 2018



I’m not sure he’d get away with it in today’s cultural climate, but Flip Wilson had a generation of us middle school kids laughing awfully doggone hard back when he was transforming himself into his in-your-face female character, Geraldine, on his popular *Flip Wilson Show*.

Regardless of what you think of Wilson’s Geraldine, there was something “she” was known to say back then that’s been normalized into our thinking about love, sex, and marriage today: “Love is a feeling you feel when you’re about to feel a feeling you never felt before! Whooooo!” Back then, it made my childish self laugh. Today, those words make me shudder.

In an age that celebrates the self and encourages us to idolize and pursue the satisfaction of any and every personal desire, feelings have become something that we act on, rather than something that we should manage and even distrust. Instead of cautiously evaluating our feelings and the roller-coaster paths they are prone to put us on, we feel and then follow. Sadly, when feelings become the foundation on which we make decisions about love, sex, and marriage in today’s world. . . well. . . nothing is permanent. In fact, a close look at the trends indicates that a growing number of kids have been so turned off to marriage, that they don’t even *feel* like marriage is an option for them. Consequently, co-habitation and out-of-wedlock births continue to be on the rise.

Geraldine was reflecting what’s become a cultural narrative that’s diametrically opposed to the biblical narrative. Yes, God has given us the gift of emotions. And, as such, we need to manage that gift to His glory in ways that corral our emotions within the boundaries of His authority, rather than

vice-versa. We need to learn that feelings of joy, elation, fascination, and even infatuation can be wonderful things that we can embrace when they are directed towards things that are good, true, right, and honorable. But we must also realize that feelings should not be trusted as the final arbiter in decision-making. That’s especially important for our kids, whose brains are still in the process of getting wired-up, with the last part getting wired-up being the frontal lobe. . . which is the part responsible for decision-making and impulse control. In other words, our kids are especially prone to falling victim to their feelings.

Parents, we’re not immune to this in our own lives. If we’ve been married for more than a week, we know just how all-over-the-place our emotions can be. Sometimes, marriage is the greatest thing in the world. At other times, we might not *feel* like we’ve made the right decision. Consider this powerful corrective to the cultural narrative from Tim Keller in his daily devotional on Proverbs, *God’s Wisdom for Navigating Life*: “Traditional vows don’t mention feelings at all. In marriage vows we do not merely express present love – we promise future love. We promise not to always feel loving but rather to be loving, faithful, tender, and compassionate no matter how we feel at the time. Marriage is a covenant; it requires lifelong endurance, strengthened by our vows.”

Youth workers and parents. . . we can’t speak and example this truth enough. Remember, Geraldine’s words are being preached to our kids 24/7 through the cultural script. They’ve got to be seeing and hearing something different. Geraldine used to tell us, “Don’t fight the feeling!” Well, you can be sure there are times when we should.★

Most Followed Celebrities on Instagram

Source:
Seventeen.com



1. **Selena Gomez**
2. **Cristiano Ronaldo**
3. **Ariana Grande**
4. **Beyonce**
5. **Kim Kardashian**
6. **Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson**
7. **Kylie Jenner**
8. **Taylor Swift**
9. **Justin Bieber**
10. **Neymar**



QUICK STATS

In 2017, 39.5% of teenagers surveyed said they had ever had sex. That number is down from 47.8% in 2007, and 57% in 1988.
(Centers for Disease Control)

Players who started playing tackle football before the age of 12 displayed symptoms related to Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) an average of 13 years earlier than other players.
(Annals of Neurology)

FROM THE NEWS:

FORTNITE COACHES and OVER-PARENTING

Fortnite Battle Royale is one of the most popular online multi-player video games being played by kids today. The game features up to 100 players who play alone, in pairs, or in groups of up to four players who attempt to be the last player or group alive by killing other players or evading them. In a strange twist to helicopter parenting, the *Wall Street Journal* has reported that parents are now actually hiring Fortnite coaches to teach their children how to play the game at a high level. Parents are paying as much as twenty dollars an hour for these coaches, in much the same way they would hire academic tutors or coaches who give private athletic lessons. This trend should cause us to pause, step back, and evaluate if we are over-parenting our own kids in ways that not only keep kids from just being kids, but which facilitate things like anxiety, stress, entitlement, and even an unhealthy emphasis on winning at all costs. Parents, how you spend your money indicates what you worship.

TRENDS:

PLASTIC SURGERY, KIDS & IDENTITY

If you think back to your own middle and high school years, you remember having great concerns about your appearance. You felt pressure to measure up to unwritten standards regarding hair, complexion, weight, body shape, and more. In today's world, unrealistic standards are now transmitted 24/7 through social media, meaning that the pressure on our kids has increased exponentially. A recent study published in the *Journal of Plastic and Reconstructive*

Surgery reports that social media has increased the number of teenagers going under the knife for aesthetic cosmetic surgery procedures, including things like breast implants, rhino-plasty, lifts, and other enhancements. These types of procedures increased by 11% in patients under the age of 19

during 2017. This is not at all surprising in a world where identity is found in appearance and what others think of you. Teach your kids to find their identity in who they are in Christ.



LATEST RESEARCH:

RAPID ONSET GENDER DYSPHORIA

If you've tracked with youth culture over the years, you know that trends like disordered eating and self-injury have been on the rise. Researchers believe that a significant portion of these increases can be attributed to what's known as behavioral or social contagion. This is a type of social influence that occurs when a certain behavior

exhibited by one person is copied by others who learn of and embrace the behavior through social contact or through the media. Now, Brown University researcher Lisa Littman has published a study suggesting that the recent rise in kids who self-identify as transgender could be part of a new social contagion. Littman's research points to what's called rapid onset gender dysphoria, which typically occurs in girls rather suddenly and in clusters. Parents, peer influence is strong.

Push back on the cultural gender narrative by speaking and living the biblical narrative, that God has made us male and female and that our biological gender is all part of his plan.

COLLEGE
TRANSITION
INITIATIVE

a resource of CPYU


www.CollegeTransitionInitiative.com
To Drink or
Not to Drink

by Derek Melleby

Many students that you know and love have headed off to college this fall. Some students may be nervous about the college cultural expectations to "go wild," and have questions about how to resist the temptations that lie ahead. As you engage in conversations with college students about drinking, here are five things to be sure to communicate:

1. You don't have to drink to meet people and have a good time.
2. It is possible to go to college and not abuse alcohol.
3. Many students involved in the "party scene" don't want to be.
4. Make no mistake, binge drinking in college does lead to "risky sexual behavior, lower grades and a rise in violent crime, accidental injury and death."
5. The people with whom you surround yourself is one of the most important decisions you make.

We must be willing to challenge the cultural myth that college is a time for students "to do whatever they want before entering the real world." The reality is that the years between 18-25 are formative. Decisions are made during this time that give shape to the rest of life. A series of bad decisions can have a lasting impact.

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 65 titled "Teaching Daughters About Sex and Sexuality" with Tim Geiger.

FROM THE WORD

Growing up in today's youth culture means that our kids live their lives on a landscape filled with all kinds of pressures and choices. One of the most important lessons we can teach them is that whenever they make a choice, they are choosing sides. They either choose the narrow road that leads to life as they make their choice intent on bringing glory to the Kingdom of God, or they choose the wide road that brings glory to what the Bible calls the kingdoms of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Counselor Timothy Lane reminds us that the world, the flesh, and the devil are three basic elements to temptation. The world includes our past, our strengths and weaknesses, and our relationships. These things don't determine our behavior, but are our "bents" that lead us to respond and choose in certain ways. The flesh is our evil desires. And the devil is the one who uses the world and the flesh to set traps that lead us into sin. . . and then accuses us of being so rotten and evil when we do sin that we stand no chance before God.

"THE ONE WHO IS IN YOU IS GREATER THAN THE ONE WHO IS IN THE WORLD."

1 JOHN 4:4

But John reminds us that while we are to remain watchful because of the world, the flesh, and the devil, God has provided a way out. The Spirit tells us, "The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world" (James 4:4). That's a message that we must embrace ourselves, and never stop teaching our kids.

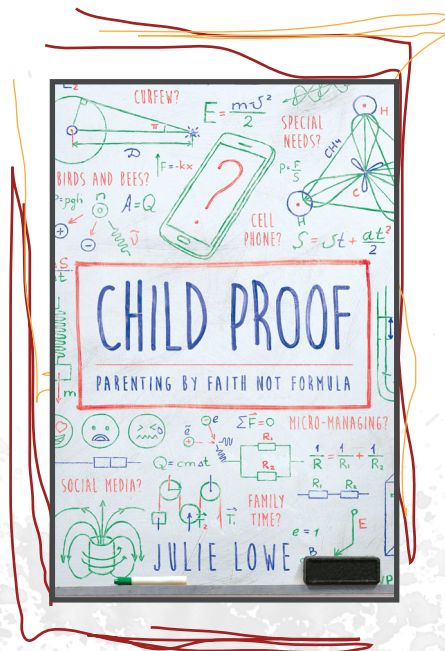
HELPFUL RESOURCE ←

As a freedom-over-formula parenting book for moms, dads, and caregivers of all ages, *Child Proof: Parenting By Faith Not Formula* provides biblical insight and encouragement for readers who want to parent by faith. As an experienced counselor of children and families and an adoptive and foster mom, Julie Lowe uses Scripture and biblical wisdom to teach caregivers how to know their children and specifically love them with the love of Christ.

Every family is unique, which is why *Child Proof* explores the need for parents to cultivate personal and intimate care for their children as modeled in God's individual, personal, and fatherly care to his children. This child-rearing book lays a foundation of parenting by faith and progresses by teaching readers how they can know their own kids well and raise them accordingly. By discussing particular issues moms and dads might have in family life, Lowe demonstrates how formulas aren't the answer, and parenting with biblical wisdom is best for a proactive rather than reactive approach to parenting.

Through Lowe's personal and professional experience, moms, dads, and caregivers, as well as those helping parents—pastors, counselors, youth workers, and churches—will discover gospel-centered application rather than formulas for the ideal family, equipping guardians to be experts at knowing their own children so they can know Scripture and live it out personally in their homes.

By establishing a mindset rather than a model or a step-by-step "how to" approach to parenting, *Child Proof* empowers readers to come up with their own blueprint for their families through a biblical framework.



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