

## YOUTH CULTURE HOT QUOTE

*Your phone addiction is something you can change. Insist on unplugging, and include your spouse, if you have one. Commit to walking in your house with your family and turning off your phone. Can you do it? Because if you can't do it, your kids can't do it. And if you can't demonstrate that behavior, then don't be surprised when you're sitting at dinner and your kid's looking down at their phone. The phone isn't going to teach them to put it down; you have to. I do believe the solution to kids' obsessions with their phones starts with a look in the mirror. The problem is you and your addiction to your phone; it's not your kid. Your kid is simply doing what he or she has seen you do.*

Jamie Lee Curtis, as told to **THINK** editor Megan Carpentier, explaining why she wrote her latest book "Me, Myself & I" in September 2018 (nbcnews.com).



# Raising Kids For Trouble

WALT MUELLER, CPYU President



I'm not sure how it happened, but I graduated from high school and into adulthood with the belief that following Jesus was a pathway to an easy and peace-filled life. "Come and follow Jesus. . . and everything will fall into place" might not have been exactly what I was taught, but it was what I heard. Perhaps it was all a part of wishful thinking.

Today, my head and my experience tell me that the life of discipleship is not easy. . . nor, was it promised to be easy. Jesus said, "In this world you will have trouble" (John 16:33). Still, I sometimes find myself living functionally with the expectation that the Christian life should be one free of pain, heartache, and difficulty.

As parents, we are naturally driven to protect our children from the harm that comes with facing troubles and difficulties in life. If you're like me, it almost kills you to see your kids cry out in pain from the emotional, physical, relational, and even spiritual difficulties that come at them in life. Our kids are growing up in a world where the cultural narrative pushes the expectation and pursuit of pleasure, along with the total avoidance of pain and difficulty. Sadly, the culture is getting it wrong. What's normal, realistic, and to be expected is what Jesus said in John 16:33. How can we prepare them for a life of peace with God in a world filled with brokenness that is sure to pay our kids a visit from time to time?

The answer is found in the Scriptures. I recently encountered Christian thinker Charles Spurgeon's answer to the question, "What is the reason for our troubles?" Spurgeon said there are four reasons that we find in Scripture. Ponder each, and make them part of your efforts to nurture your kids in the faith. . .

**First, God uses the furnace of affliction to refine us.** "Behold, I have refined you, but not

as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction." (Isaiah 48:10). This is the *upward* reason for our troubles.

**Second, as followers of Christ we are enemies of Satan. . . and he assaults us.** "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." (1 Peter 5:8). This is the *downward* reason for our troubles.

**Third, because we are strangers and aliens in this world we will face the trials that come with living life on this broken earth.** "You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." (James 4:4). This is the *outward* reason for our troubles.

**And fourth, we battle our own broken and sinful hearts.** "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). I've learned that I'm typically the source of my own difficulties. This is the *inward* source of our troubles.

Spurgeon reminds us that while we must recognize and reckon with these realities, we can't throw up our hands in despair. The good news is that God promises to be with us and to deliver us. "When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him." (Psalm 91:15). Have you checked out the second half of John 16:33? Jesus says, "But take heart! I have overcome the world."

The cultural narrative is pointing us and our kids into false expectations and beliefs that will influence our desires and behaviors in the wrong direction. Thanks be to God for his Word. Take heart! He has overcome the world. Let's learn it, embrace it, live it, and teach it! ✨

## Technology & Social Media

Preferences among teens in high school

Source:

Piper Jaffray 36th Semi-Annual  
*Taking Stock With Teens Survey, Fall 2018*



### Daily Video Consumption

1. Netflix
2. YouTube
3. Cable TV
4. Hulu
5. Other streaming services

### Favorite Social Media Platforms

1. Snapchat
2. Instagram
3. Twitter
4. Facebook
5. Pinterest

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### QUICK STATS

8% of young people are reporting that marijuana is the first substance they've experimented with. This is an increase of almost 200% over the last ten years.

*(Prevention Science)*

41% of females and 37% of males reported experience with adolescent dating violence as a victim; and 35% of females and 29% of males as a perpetrator at some point in their lifetime.

*(American Psychological Association)*

### FROM THE NEWS:

## THEYBIES

One of the childbirth realities you might not hear a whole lot about or be familiar with, is that of a child being born as intersex. This is a general term used to describe a variety of conditions where the reproductive anatomy doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of male or female. In these very rare situations, parents and medical personnel face difficult ethical dilemmas. But in today's rapidly changing ethical landscape, children being born with obvious male or female anatomy are being given gender-neutral names along with an opportunity from mom and dad to grow up and decide their gender designation for themselves. The Scriptures clearly teach God's created intent, that he makes us male or female. To allow a child to decide for themselves might be culturally cutting-edge, but it isn't right. In a day and age where kids are being encouraged to decide for themselves, we must teach them that they are either male or female, as determined by God's good order and design.

## TRENDS: TEENS DROPPING OUT OF ORGANIZED SPORTS

Without a doubt, youth sports can provide many benefits. There's the benefit of good health and improved physical fitness. Sports can teach cooperation and teamwork. Play can be fun. And there are lessons to be learned about life from both winning and losing. But rather than reaping these benefits, too many kids are paying the price that comes from too much parental pressure to win or be the best. Before they're even halfway through elementary school, many of our kids have already chosen one sport to specialize in and play year-round. Times have changed since the days when most "organized" sports were organized by kids who converged on a neighborhood backyard after school. The only shouting done by adults were the shouts summoning kids home for dinner. When it came to play, ten-year-old kids couldn't get enough. Today, they say they've had more than enough. Take stock of what you're teaching your kids. Stop the shouting and let your kids have fun.



## LATEST RESEARCH: TEXTING WHILE DRIVING

As with all things, God's good gift of technology can be used properly, or it can be used improperly. One of the most serious issues related to smartphone use is the issue of texting while driving. Of course, none of us is exempt from engaging in this dangerous and sometimes deadly practice. But teenagers, who are by nature

far more impulsive than adults, are especially prone to texting while driving. New research in the *Journal of Adolescent Health* is telling us that nearly 40% of teen drivers in the United States say they text while driving. And, in an especially deadly combination, those who admitted

to drinking and driving were nearly two times more likely to text while driving than those who did not drink and drive. Parents, we must teach our kids that driving is a privilege that must be engaged in with great care. We must teach them that texting while driving is always wrong, and we must practice what we preach. All of us must learn to drive safely to the glory of God.

### CPYU'S DIGITAL KIDS INITIATIVE



[www.DigitalKidsInitiative.com](http://www.DigitalKidsInitiative.com)

## Following Jesus on the Digital Frontier

by Walt Mueller



The latest Pew Research Center survey on teenagers, social media, and technology has found that nearly half of American teenagers surveyed say they use the Internet almost constantly. The 45% figure from this latest survey is nearly double the 24% who reported using the Internet almost constantly back in 2014 and 2015. These numbers are up as nearly all teenagers now have access to a smartphone.

Living on this new digital landscape means that our children and teens are being socialized and nurtured into notions of identity and worldviews that are many times opposed to the biblical message on identity and the biblical worldview. Since technology is a fact of life that is here to stay, we must equip our kids to understand that they were made to find their identity in Jesus Christ, and that a biblical worldview is the worldview that makes sense of everything in life.

Teach the kids you know and love to faithfully follow Jesus on the digital frontier.



## 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](http://www.cpyu.org/podcast).

Be sure to check out Episode 69 for a discussion with Cameron Cole (author of the book featured below) and his wife Lauren.

## FROM THE WORD

In today's world, we're told that true freedom and human flourishing come when we discover and live *our own* truth. In other words, what feels right to me at any given point in time should direct how I live. But the Gospel tells us that true freedom and human flourishing come when we live according to God's unchanging truth. Jesus says, "You will know the truth and the truth will set you free!"

Our kids need to hear and embrace this reality if they want to experience true freedom and the fullness of what God intended for humanity. How should we train them to engage with truth? Here are five habits each of us can incorporate into our lives.

First, seek truth. Search for it relentlessly in the Scriptures. Second, stare at the truth. Once you've seen it, keep looking at it. Third, savor the truth. Taste it and enjoy it! Fourth, submit to the truth. God has given us the truth so that we can build our lives on it and around it. And fifth, say the truth. Don't keep it to yourself. Speak it and share it. Why? Because the truth is ultimately what everyone is searching for.

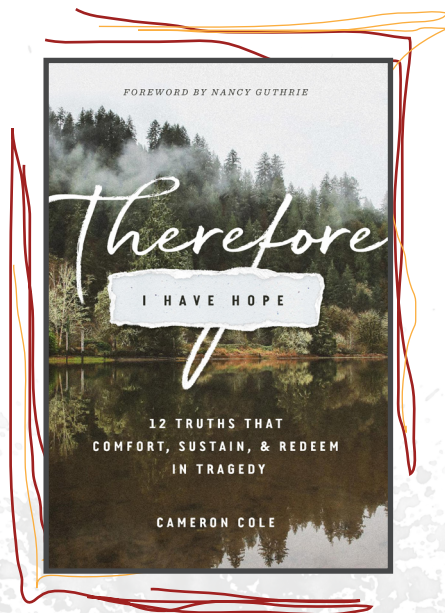
**"SO JESUS SAID TO THE JEWS WHO HAD BELIEVED HIM, "IF YOU ABIDE IN MY WORD, YOU ARE TRULY MY DISCIPLES, AND YOU WILL KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE!"**  
**JOHN 8:31-32**

## HELPFUL RESOURCE ←

"Throughout the journey of my worst nightmare—my descent into a dark, sad valley—the Holy Spirit would remind me of truths that comforted my soul and sustained my life."

After the sudden death of their three-year-old son, Cameron Cole and his wife found themselves clinging to Christ through twelve key theological truths—truths that became their lifeline in the midst of unthinkable grief. Weaving together their own story of tragic loss and abiding faith, Cole explores these twelve life-giving truths to offer hope and comfort to those in the midst of tragedy.

*Therefore I Have Hope: 12 Truths That Comfort, Sustain, and Redeem in Tragedy* is a book CPYU recommends to parents as well as youth workers. Not only do we need to hear the messages of this book, but we need to teach the 12 truths to our children and teens as well.



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