

Helping **parents** understand **teenagers** and their world

Raising Successful Kids

WALT MUELLER, CPYU President



YOUTH CULTURE HOT QUOTE

“They said I had a huge jaw. They said I had a ‘potato head.’ When you’re 14 or 15, I didn’t really understand having value in myself yet. My mind went to, ‘Okay, so if I get skinny or if I dress the right way or present myself very hyper-sexually and dress this way, then I’ll be valued.’ So much for me became wrapped up in that my value set is based on what other people think of me, and had nothing to do with what I thought about myself.”

Rumer Willis, on how public criticism of her appearance negatively impacted her at a young age, *HuffPost* interview with Caroline Modarressy-Tehrani, August 7, 2019



A few nights ago I watched an NHL hockey game where a 19-year-old was making his NHL debut. The announcer asked mom and dad, “What’s going through your head as you sit here tonight?” Mom enthusiastically responded, “This is a dream come true!”

As I watched the game, I got to thinking about the dreams we have for our kids. The dreams we embrace shape the way we parent our kids, along with what it is we parent towards. What are your hopes and dreams for your kids? When they leave your home and embark on life after the teenage years, what will it mean for them to be “successful”?

In a world that equates “success” with the ongoing acquisition of fame and fortune, followers of Christ need to embrace the truth that “success” is not what the world says it is, but rather obedience and faithfulness to Christ. With the Apostle John we should say, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth” (3 John 1:4).

In their recent book, *Faith For Exiles*, David Kinnaman and Mark Matlock tell us that nearly two-thirds of all young adults who were once regular churchgoers have dropped out at one time or another. In other words, so many of our kids who we hope and pray will lead “successful” lives by “walking in the truth” are abandoning the faith, choosing instead to live their lives to the glory of things other than God. But in a hope-filled response to this reality, David and Mark have conducted research which reveals that by cultivating five practices, we can see our kids formed into disciples of Jesus Christ who take a vibrant and lasting faith into adulthood.

First, we must clear religious clutter to help them experience intimacy with Jesus. Instead of filling their lives with all kinds of competing affiliations and affinities, we must help them see that Jesus doesn’t ask for a part of our lives, but he asks for *all* of our lives. We must model spiritual vitality in our own lives.

Second, we must help them develop muscles of cultural discernment. This means they must learn to live under the authority of the Bible so that they might be able to clearly tell the difference between right and wrong, both in terms of behaviors and ideas.

Third, we need to foster the development of meaningful intergenerational relationships with fellow believers. We want our kids to learn from the wisdom of those who are older than themselves. If your church consistently separates the generations for education, worship, and fellowship, that needs to be changed or you need to move on.

Fourth, we need to train our kids in vocational discipleship. In other words, they need to realize that all work matters to God and that faith needs to be lived out by embracing God’s calling and working to further God’s purposes through their vocation.

Finally, we need to curb entitlement and self-centered tendencies by engaging in countercultural mission. We must teach and guide them into living lives of faithful obedience by trusting God’s power and living differently from cultural norms and expectations.

Are you pointing your kids to a life of “success”? ★

Most-Watched Original TV Shows on Netflix

from October 2018 -
September 2019

Source:
Netflix shareholder report
obtained by The New York
Times



1. *Stranger Things*

2. *The Umbrella*

Academy

3. *La Casa De Papel*

4. *You*

5. *Sex Education*

6. *Our Planet*

7. *Unbelievable*

8. *Dead to Me*

9. *When They See Us*

10. *Elite*



QUICK STATS

Among teens ages 13-17, 70% cited depression and anxiety as the most critical issue facing young people their age.
(Pew)

Preschoolers who engage with screens for 2 or more hours a day are 5x more likely to exhibit major behavioral problems and 7x more likely to show signs of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder when compared to children who spent 30 minutes or less each day on a screen.

(University of Alberta)

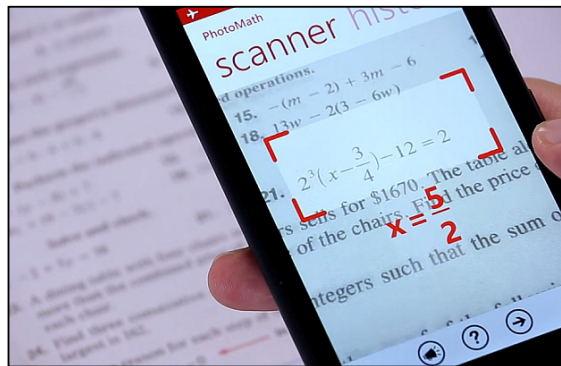
FROM THE NEWS:

SHARENTING

Parents, are you familiar with the term “sharenting”? Sharenting is defined as the overuse of social media by parents to share content featuring their children, such as baby pictures or details of their children’s activities. It is related to the concept of “too much information.” Because we are only a few years into living out our lives on the landscape of social media, we really don’t know what the full effect of oversharing information and pictures of our kids will be. One concern regards the legal issues. Law experts are saying that a parents’ right to free speech and self-expression is actually at odds with a child’s right to privacy when they are young and vulnerable. As children are growing older and moving onto the social media landscape themselves, they can resent all the information, photos, and disclosures made by their parents over the course of their young lives. Parents, we don’t need to show everyone everything. Most things are best enjoyed in the privacy of our face-to-face interactions.

TRENDS: CHEATING WITH APPS

Here at CPYU, we believe that technology is a good gift from God. But as with all things, we can either use our smartphones to the glory of God, or we can use them to the glory of the world, the flesh, and the devil. The folks at Common Sense Media warn us that our kids are using their smartphones in negative ways when they access and improperly use some of the growing number of homework help apps and sites. Parents, here are a few of those sites you should be aware of. Photomath and Mathway allow kids to point their device at a problem, scan it, and then get the answer. Of course, this can be a help when students use the apps to see and learn the steps needed to come up with the right answer. But many kids are simply scanning for just the answer. When it comes to writing essays, the Essaybot app allows kids to use pre-written paragraphs and even buy full essays. Parents, this kind of misuse not only compromises the opportunity to learn, but it is cheating.



LATEST RESEARCH: SEXTING

Sexting is a growing practice among teenagers that's been facilitated by the use of smartphones and social media. It is defined as the exchange of sexual messages, photos, or videos. The practice is becoming more prevalent, with an estimated 15% of adolescents sending sexual messages, and about 25% of adolescents receiving the messages. New research conducted to examine the potential risks have found a link between sexting and increased sexual behaviors as well as an increase in mental health risks among youth. In fact, adolescents who sext are more than three times more likely to have engaged in sexual activity.

The *Journal of the American Medical Association Pediatrics* also found a doubled likelihood of anxiety or depression. Ultimately, we want our kids to experience God's grand and glorious design for the gift of sexuality. Consequently, encourage your kids to embrace Godly online behaviors as a path to true freedom and flourishing.

CPYU'S DIGITAL KIDS INITIATIVE

www.DigitalKidsInitiative.com

Smartphones and Pornography

by Walt Mueller



In a recent article in *First Things* magazine, Terry Schilling shared these sobering words: "A thirteen-year-old with a smartphone in 2019 has greater access to pornography than the most depraved deviant could have dreamed possible two decades ago."

As parents called by God to nurture our children through childhood and into a spiritually healthy adulthood, we have the responsibility to be keenly aware of pornography's presence, its compelling draw, and the impact it has on our kids. When it comes to pornography, what they see and experience now will not only shape them in the present, but will continue to influence them and their relationships for the rest of their lives. Consequently, we must be diligent in preparing our children to understand, process, and respond to this horribly fallen expression of God's good gift of sexuality in ways that bring honor and glory to God.

To learn more about pornography and how to talk to your kids about God-honoring sexuality, visit our CPYU Sexual Integrity Initiative at sexualintegrityinitiative.com.

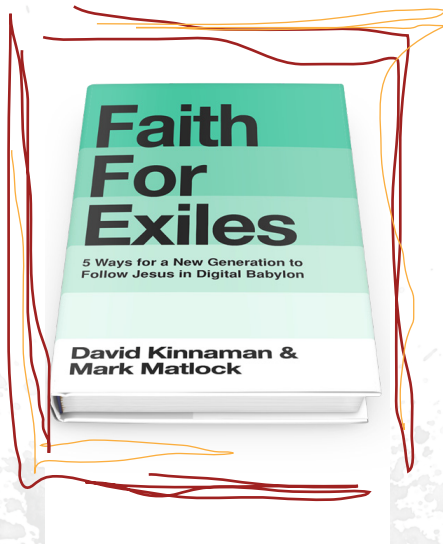
New Podcast

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 91 titled
“Concussions and Youth
Sports” with Tyler Maland
and Sheila Mueller



FROM THE WORD

“He who dies with the most toys wins.” While it may have been a few years since we’ve seen this sentiment displayed on a car bumper sticker, it’s a mantra many have embraced as a guiding principle in their lives. Our yearning for meaning, purpose, and significance so often leads us into the pursuit of fortune and status, which is ultimately a path that ends in empty dissatisfaction.

The Apostle Paul instructed Timothy to pursue the kind of wealth that isn’t made up of money and material things. Rather, Timothy was instructed to pursue the spiritual wealth that comes with setting one’s sights on the pursuit of godliness. This type of wealth results in the very contentment for which we as human beings ultimately long.

**“TRUE GODLINESS WITH
CONTENTMENT IS
ITSELF GREAT WEALTH.”**

1 TIMOTHY 6:6

Paul then goes on in verses 7&8 to explain that we can never keep money, things, and status. . . because ultimately we will leave this world the same way we entered it. . . with nothing. We must constantly remind ourselves of this truth as the message preached to us by the world can be so convincing that we allow it to derail us from the pursuit of the only thing in life that matters.

Parents, never ever forget that the most powerful teaching tool in your parenting arsenal is your own example. Are you pursuing true godliness?

HELPFUL RESOURCE ←

Negative perceptions. Church dropouts. Prodigals and nomads.

It’s easy to become discouraged by all that’s going wrong when it comes to Christianity and the emerging generation. Yet what’s going right? In fact, signs of hope are springing up all around. *Faith for Exiles* unveils major new Barna research that uncovers what’s working—five practices that contribute to resilience. Enter the world of resilient young adult Christians, learn how they are sustaining faith, and find hope in all that God is doing among young disciples today.

Barna president David Kinnaman teams up with former executive director of Youth Specialties Mark Matlock to help you:

- make sense of chaotic cultural changes and respond with compassion to the next generation of believers
- recognize the biblical concept of exile as an essential framework for following Christ today
- discover five research-based practices that cultivate faithfulness in digital Babylon
- prepare young Christians to be on mission with Jesus in the world
- empower Jesus followers of all ages to thrive in our current exile

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