

Smartphones and Pornography

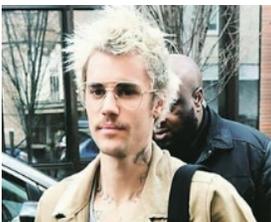
WALT MUELLER, CPYU President



YOUTH CULTURE HOT QUOTE

“Millions (of fans were) saying how much they loved me and how great I was. .. You hear these things enough as a young boy and you actually start believing it... So by this point I was 18 with no skills in the real world, with millions of dollars and access to whatever I wanted. This is a very scary concept for anyone.”

Justin Bieber, speaking about his rapid rise to fame during childhood, in an Instagram post, September 2, 2019



“At what age should I allow my son to have his own smartphone?” Without a doubt, that’s the question I get asked by parents of pre-teen boys and girls more than any other. The question is asked because wise parents who have a clue are aware of two conflicting matters. First, their children are sure to let them know that they might be “the last kid” in their circle of friends without a smartphone. . . and truth be told, no kid wants to be left out. Second, parents have some sense of how the smartphone will send kids down a rabbit-hole of good *and* bad from which there’s no turning back. Consequently, they are looking for guidance and direction on how to make the right smartphone decision for their child.

I’m guessing that most of you who are reading this right now are raising kids who spend a good portion of their waking and should-be-sleeping hours staring into that 15-square-inches of glass that’s at their fingertips close to 24/7. Recent research tells us that the tipping point where more than half of our kids have their own smartphones is now age 11. This means that there’s a sizable portion of early elementary aged children who already have their own smartphone.

As my dad used to say in our pre-digital world, “Privileges come with responsibility.” That’s some good advice we can pass on to our kids as we equip them to honor the Lord through the use of the good gift of technology. Of course, this requires diligence on our part. Parenting has actually gotten a bit more complex as we have to monitor where our kids are spending their online time. Living responsibly on the digital frontier should be rewarded with greater freedom. But when boundaries are crossed into the danger zone of sinful irresponsibility, we need to pull back and tighten the reins.

One of the most dangerous landscapes our kids *will* encounter is the digital playground

of pornography. In a recent article, culture-watcher Terry Schilling writes these 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. . . Not only has pornography become more accessible, it has become more diverse and perverse, as cultural vanguards and even mainstream institutions have promoted sexual fetishism as a new sort of societal norm, if not overtly, then with a wink and a nod.”

What are some steps we can take to stem this tide and ensure the sexual flourishing of our kids?

First, talk openly about God’s good gift of sexuality. It’s not a dirty thing, but a good gift to be experienced within the context of a monogamous, covenantal, heterosexual marriage between one man and one woman.

Second, let them know that fallen expressions of sexuality are all around us. They *will* in fact encounter the reality, temptations, and dangers of pornography.

Third, remind them that when they do encounter pornography they should “flee from sexual immorality” (1 Cor 6:18).

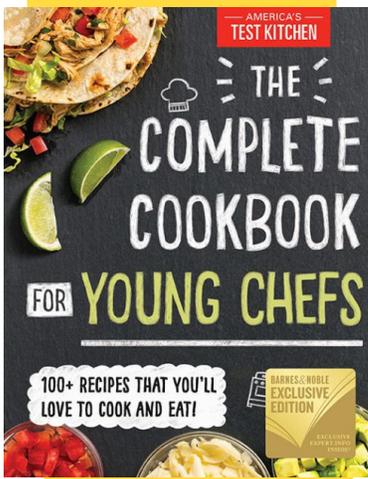
And finally, make wise digital media choices for them. Don’t put a smartphone with internet access in the hands of a child. For those older kids who do have smartphones, monitor their use and constantly remind them that their phone is a tool for bringing honor and glory to God. ✪

If you would like to learn more about kids and pornography, point your smartphone’s camera at this QR code to access our FREE “Parent’s Primer On Internet Pornography.”



Children's Middle Grade Hardcover Books

Week of March 1, 2020
Source:
The New York Times



1. *Legacy and the Queen* by Annie Matthew
(created by Kobe Bryant)
2. *Epoca: The Tree of Ecrof* by Ivy Claire (created by Kobe Bryant)
3. *The Wizenard: Training Camp* by Wesley King
(created by Kobe Bryant)
4. *Little Legends: Exceptional Men in Black History* by Vashti Harrison with Kwesi Johnson
5. *Diary of an Awesome Friendly Kid* by Jeff Kinney
6. *Little Leaders* by Vashti Harrison
7. *The Complete Cookbook for Young Chefs* by America's Test Kitchen Kids
8. *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio
9. *Ali Cross* by James Patterson
10. *Clean Getaway* by Nic Stone



QUICK STATS

Only 28% of our 8-12 year olds say that their parent tracks their device time. And, only 14% of 13-18 year olds say they have parents who track their device time.

(Common Sense Census)

Roughly 95% of U.S. parents said it was "important" to involve their children in purchases specifically for the child, and 85% said the same regarding purchases for the family or household.

(National Retail Federation)

FROM THE NEWS:

VAPING MARIJUANA

Here's some new updated information on the teen vaping crisis. The latest data indicates that three-quarters of teenagers who vape use the electronic cigarette devices to smoke not just products containing nicotine, but marijuana as well. Researchers also found that vaping is more common among white teenagers than among black or Hispanic teens. The healthcare experts who released the research sent a strong reminder that there are no forms of vaping that are safe. Parents, you've no doubt seen the growing number of news report relaying the latest research on the dangers of vaping, along with some of the horrifying stories surrounding teenagers who are suffering from the effects of vaping. Be sure to talk with your kids about the dangers of both vaping and conventional cigarettes. Teach your kids to honor and glorify God through the care and stewardship of their bodies. Remember, kids think they are invulnerable, which makes them very vulnerable.

TRENDS: DECLINE IN READING

The recently released Common Sense Census offers helpful insights into the ways that our children and teens are using media. While the report focuses primarily on their use of smartphones and screens, there is one finding related to reading that should cause us concern. Nearly a third of all teenagers in this country say that they read for pleasure less than once a month, if at all. While the good news is that two-thirds of our kids do read for fun, we can expect that the number of readers will continue to drop with digital distractions on the rise. As parents, we should not only be teaching our kids how to use their smartphones and screens responsibly and with moderation, but we should also be making sure that our kids are reading. Reading off the printed page is good for our brains, expands knowledge, and can help us develop a greater appreciation for biblical truth and God's world. We need to cultivate young readers. Be sure to monitor your kids use of their time, building in times for reading.



LATEST RESEARCH: SOCCER AND CONCUSSIONS

As we continue to pass on information about the long-term effects of concussions and sub-concussive impacts on our kids who play football, there's additional news coming out about the effects of head impacts on our girls who play soccer. While researchers at the University of North Carolina found that football has the highest concussion rate, the rate for girls who play soccer is not far behind. In fact, the rate is twice that of boys who play soccer. Experts speculate that girls have smaller, weaker necks than their male counterparts, which makes their heads more susceptible to trauma. Researchers are also wondering if hormonal differences play a role. In addition, there is speculation that girls are more likely to report a blow to the head during soccer activity than are boys. Parents, if you have a child playing a sport that includes blows to the head, please remember: God has placed us in the role of stewards of our children and their health. Make decisions based on what's best for your child.



SEXUAL INTEGRITY INITIATIVE

A resource of CPYU and Project Six19

Thou Shalts on Sex

by Walt Mueller



When it comes to contemporary attitudes on sex and sexuality, we really do need to have our minds and hearts transformed and renewed. God has established a pattern and design for his wonderful gift of sexuality. God's "thou shalt's" about sexuality are often misunderstood by a world that misunderstands God's attitudes about sex to be nothing but a long list of "thou shalt not's." Nothing could be further from the truth. Of course, when it comes to sex, the culture teaches that there are no borders or boundaries. This makes it all the more necessary for us to teach our kids how to listen to God's Word on sex, rather than the world's message on sex. Encourage your kids to see the dangers related to filling their hearts and minds with all the sexual junk that leads away from God's design. The apostle Paul tells us that we are to no longer be conformed to the patterns of this world. Spend time with your kids reading God's words and his positive "thou shalt's" on sex and sexuality.

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 97 for an interview with Dr. Leonard Sax titled "Stop Letting Your Kids Make The Call."

FROM THE WORD

Several years ago, a concerned father approached me at a church to ask me a question about the powerful voices of youth culture: "How can I expect my 13-year-old son to hear the still small voice of God with all these other voices screaming in his ears, 'Come and follow! Come and follow! Come and follow!'"

The battle to hear the life-giving voice of God is not limited to the ears of our children and teens. The voices of what the Apostle Paul calls "the course of this world" are all around us as we endeavor to parent our kids. Those voices are loud, attractive, compelling, and convincing. And the greater the number of our parenting peers who follow those voices, the greater the pressure on us to do the same.

The Psalmist knows full well that he needs guidance and direction. He also knows that focus is required to hear God's voice. He asks the Lord to "show me" and "teach me." He knows that he has been called to live a life consistent with God's Word and expectations. We are called to do the same. The secret is not to ask and then passively sit back and wait for God to reveal Himself. Rather, we must earnestly engage in regular, daily, and deepening first-person engagement with God's written revelation of Himself in the Bible. And, we must instill in our kids a passion to be shown and taught as well.

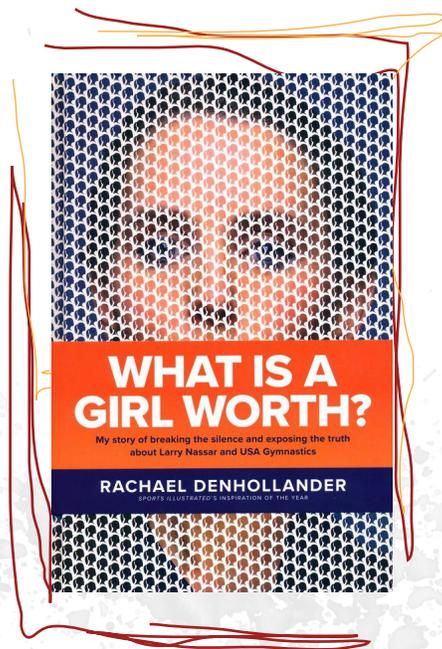
**"SHOW ME YOUR
WAYS, LORD, TEACH
ME YOUR PATHS."
PSALM 25:4 (NIV)**

HELPFUL RESOURCE ←

"Who is going to tell these little girls that what was done to them matters? That they are seen and valued, that they are not alone and they are not unprotected?"

Rachael Denhollander's voice was heard around the world when she spoke out to end the most shocking US gymnastics scandal in history. The first victim to publicly accuse Larry Nassar, the former USA Gymnastics team doctor who sexually abused hundreds of young athletes, Rachael now reveals her full story for the first time. How did Nassar get away with it for so long? How did Rachael and the other survivors finally stop him and bring him to justice? And how can we protect the vulnerable in our own families, churches, and communities?

What Is a Girl Worth? is the inspiring true story of Rachael's journey from an idealistic young gymnast to a strong and determined woman who found the courage to raise her voice against evil, even when she thought the world might not listen. In this crucial cultural moment of #metoo and #churchtoo, this deeply personal and compelling narrative shines a spotlight on the physical and emotional impact of abuse, why so many survivors are reluctant to speak out, what it means to be believed, the extraordinary power of faith and forgiveness, and how we can learn to do what's right in the moments that matter most.



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