

## Summer Of Love?

### YOUTH CULTURE HOT QUOTE

“*At the beginning, it was just about this vocal surgery. But I had been thinking a lot about my mother. My mom was adopted, and I inherited some of the feelings she had, the abandonment feelings and wanting to prove that you're wanted and valuable. My dad's parents divorced when he was 3, so my dad raised himself... I did a lot of family history, which has a lot of addiction and mental health challenges. So just going through that and asking, 'Why am I the way that I am?' By understanding the past, we understand the present and the future much more clearly.*”

Miley Cyrus, sharing her experience on choosing sobriety for the last several months, “The Big Ticket” with Marc Malkin podcast, June 23, 2020



### WALT MUELLER, CPYU President



Here we are, just six months into 2020, and already we know that this will go down in our own histories as a year filled with unexpected challenges. The first half of the year has brought monumental lifestyle changes and interruptions thanks to a pandemic, along with the challenges of dealing with our culture's long-standing inequalities. In addition, political divisions are widening. If you're like me, you're wondering what surprises the second half of 2020 will bring. It seems like we're all already living in a thick and confusing fog.

As I've been thinking back to the late 1960s and my own years of early adolescence, I can't help but notice how similar 2020 has been to what we experienced during those days of cultural change and unrest. Those years were challenging years through which to parent, and the same holds true for those of us raising kids today. While the issues are complex, let me suggest just one very timely spiritual truth we must teach our kids in the midst of this time where our differences have occasioned discord and hate. It's a lesson I believe can help us all as we live in a world where civility can so easily diminish when people disagree on how to understand and handle issues like the current pandemic, politics, and racism.

The spiritual truth we must teach is one that is foundational to who we *all* are as human beings. . . a commonality that exists in spite of our differences. It is a truth that was revealed at creation and the beginning of time. Take a minute to read the Creation account, paying special attention to Genesis 1:26-28. This is where we learn about how *all* humanity has been created in the image of God. To be created in the image of God means that He has endowed us *all* with dignity and significance. Not only does this matter for how we view ourselves, but it matters deeply for how we view and

treat others. Theologian Gregg Allison tells us that the doctrine of the image of God means that “all people should be treated with respect, with appreciation for God's excellent design. Racism, sexism, classism, and ageism are categorically excluded.”<sup>1</sup>

As the summer unfolds, our temptation to see those who might disagree with us on the issues of the day as “less than” ourselves will continue. In response, here are four practical steps you can take to instill in yourself and your kids a view of *all* people that will derail hatred that comes when we dehumanize those who are different, while moving us in the direction of loving God by loving our neighbor.

First, pray to see all people through God's eyes. Our vision is clouded by our sin, our histories, and our circumstances. Pray for clear vision.

Second, when you are tempted to diminish the value of another, remind yourself that he or she is, like you, an “image-bearer.” The father of lies wants us to deny the image of God in others.

Third, treat all others with Christ-like respect. While legitimate disagreements might exist, show the grace and kindness of Jesus Christ in all of your interactions.

And finally, denounce the diminished view of other human beings wherever you encounter it.

Back in March of 1968, there was an iconic photo taken during the Memphis sanitation workers strike. It shows a group of striking workers, each one holding a sign reading, “I Am A Man.” Let's not forget that those men, and all other humans, have been created in the image of God. ✪

<sup>1</sup> Gregg R. Allison, *50 Core Truths Of The Christian Faith*, p. 124.

TOP 10...

# Most Followed TikTok Users

By number of followers as of 6/26/2020  
Source: Socialtracker



1. *charli d'amelio*

2. *addison rae*

3. *Zach King*

4. *Loren Gray*

5. *TikTok*

6. *Riyaz*

7. *Spencer X*

8. *BabyAriel*

9. *Faisal shaikh*

10. *Michael Le*



## QUICK STATS

Kids ages 4 to 15 now spend an average of 85 minutes per day watching YouTube videos, compared with 80 minutes per day spent on TikTok. (Qustodio)

72% of parents agree that tracking meals on a health app can lead to tween concerns about weight or body image.

(C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health)

### FROM THE NEWS:

## COVID-19 AND IDOLATRY

In his first letter addressed to followers of Jesus, the Apostle John issues a six-word parting statement that is extremely direct and powerful. These six words remind us of just how easy it is to fall prey to ideas, habits, and things that become so important in our lives that they take the place of God. John writes, "Dear children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21). There is a fundamental incompatibility between the worship of God and the worship of idols. Idolatry has been defined as turning good things into "ultimate" things. Perhaps the current Covid-19 pandemic has helped you to see the idols you're prone to embrace. Share John's warning with your kids. Teach them to run from idols like the plague. Help them to look for and see the idols that are not easily recognizable. This conflict and temptation will not disappear until the day when Jesus returns and all things are made new. Keeping one's self from idols is a conscious pursuit we must embrace, model, and teach.

## TRENDS: OPIOID OVERDOSES

The latest statistics on opioid overdoses here in the United States serve as a stark reminder of just how bad the opioid crisis has gotten. What's even more alarming is the fact that a quarter of all opioid overdoses involve teenagers, with a full one-fifth of those cases likely being suicide attempts. This reality serves to remind us of our need to intervene with preventive steps. A good start is to love and nurture kids in ways that build the kind of resilience that keep kids from turning to drugs for relief or escape. When there is an absence of loving and caring adults, kids feel pressure, and left to themselves they are prone to choose dangerous and sometimes deadly behaviors as coping mechanisms. In addition, we must be aware of the constant pressure to experiment with drugs and alcohol. In response, we must provide consistent oversight, and talk about the dangers. Ultimately, we must prayerfully work to point them to finding new life and hope in Christ, along with a heartfelt desire to live to His glory.



## LATEST RESEARCH: HEARING LOSS

We want to issue a warning regarding our kids, loud noises, and the long-term damage that can be done to their hearing. Researchers now tell us that most teenagers are engaged in dangerous listening habits, with nearly half of our teens already showing potential signs of hearing loss. These signs include ringing, roaring, and buzzing in the ears, along with ear pain. One in six teens have symptoms often or all the time. Researchers have also warned us to take note of the risky habits that contribute to this problem. In fact, nearly nine out of ten teens are involved in some combination of listening to loud music with earphones, using lawn mowers and other loud tools, or are using noisy powered toys. Parents, our ears and our hearing are a gift from God. And not only can bad habits at a young age contribute to hearing loss, but hearing loss is a gateway to a host of other health issues. Get your kids to turn down the volume, to wear ear protection, and to avoid exposure to loud noises.

## COLLEGE TRANSITION INITIATIVE

a resource of CPYU

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



## Academics as Worship

by Walt Mueller



If you're a parent who's concerned about your teenager's academic performance, here's some advice from the folks at the National Center for Education Statistics regarding factors that fuel high engagement in academic pursuits. Kids are more engaged with their schoolwork if they have a high level of interaction with their parents, if they eat dinner with their family, if they are involved in extracurricular activities, if they live in homes with rules related to TV viewing, and if they attend religious services at least once a month. While these are all worthwhile activities, we must remember that many kids who pursue academic success oftentimes do so for selfish reasons. Ultimately, our goal should be to instill a desire in our kids to work hard to the glory of God as a form of worship that gives God great pleasure. In fact, that should be the motivating factor behind all of our life pursuits. Teach your kids that the best way to worship God in their academics is to pursue excellence to His glory, and not to the glory of self.

## 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 108 titled  
“Online Higher Education”  
with Duffy Robbins and 3  
Grove City College Students

## FROM THE WORD

Have you ever heard anyone describe words as having power? Specifically the power to either build people up or tear people down? Not only is that true, but it is especially true in our homes. As parents, we sometimes forget just how powerful and life-shaping our words are in the lives of our kids. A quick off-the-cuff remark that we make can not only cut deeply into our kids, but it can stay with them for life. Think back to your own childhood for a minute. Do you remember a time when your parents' words hurt? If so, the memory is probably very strong. Now, do you remember a time when your parents said something that was especially encouraging to you? That memory is probably equally as strong.

The Apostle Paul spoke to the Ephesian church about the power of words. In Ephesians 4:29 he warns them against using “unwholesome” talk. A more accurate translation might be “rotten” talk or “worthless” talk. Instead, our words should be carefully chosen in order to impart life, hope, blessing, love, and grace into the lives of others. . . particularly our kids.

**“DO NOT LET ANY UNWHOLESOME TALK COME OUT OF YOUR MOUTHS, BUT ONLY WHAT IS HELPFUL FOR BUILDING OTHERS UP ACCORDING TO THEIR NEEDS, THAT IT MAY BENEFIT THOSE WHO LISTEN.”**

**EPHESIANS 4:29**

Teenagers consistently tell us that the two things they yearn to hear the most from their parents are these: “I love you” and “I’m proud of you.” Of course, there are many different ways to say those two things. Take stock of your conversation and words and be more deliberate about communicating in ways that build up rather than tear down your children and teens. Even though you might think that something said quickly and without much thought is benign, those words are indeed powerful. . . and they can become a cancer that eats away at your kids long after they leave home.

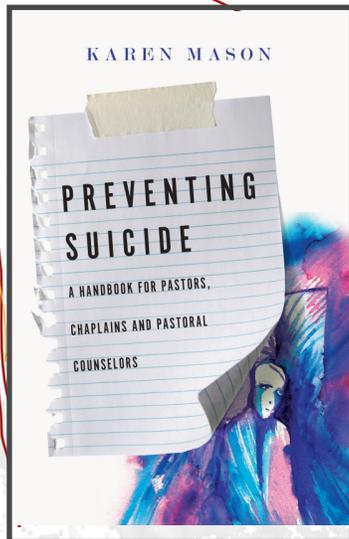
## HELPFUL RESOURCE ←

What is the church’s role in suicide prevention?

While we tend to view the work of suicide prevention as the task of professional therapists and doctors, the church can also play a vital role. Studies show that religious faith is an important factor reducing the risk of suicide. Yet many pastors, chaplains and pastoral counselors feel overwhelmed and unprepared to prevent suicides.

In *Preventing Suicide: A Handbook for Pastors, Chaplains and Pastoral Counselors*, psychologist Karen Mason equips ministry professionals to work with suicidal individuals. Integrating theology and psychology, she shows how pastoral caregivers can be agents of hope, teaching the significance of life, monitoring those at risk and intervening when they need help. Because church leaders are often present in people’s lives in seasons of trouble and times of crisis, they can provide comfort in the midst of suffering and offer guidance for the future.

When our church members struggle in the darkness, the darkness need not overcome them. Discover how you and your church can be proactive in caring for those at risk of self-harm.



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PHONE: (717) 361-8429 EMAIL: [CPYU@CPYU.ORG](mailto:CPYU@CPYU.ORG)  
PO BOX 414, ELIZABETHTOWN, PA 17022 | [WWW.CPYU.ORG](http://WWW.CPYU.ORG)