

# CPYU PARENT PAGE

THE CENTER FOR PARENT/YOUTH  
UNDERSTANDING

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

## TRUTH & SPIN

### YOUTH CULTURE HOT QUOTE

*“There is a creeping sense of burnout from many LA TikTokers I’ve spoken to, that their sense of identity is so tied up in the numbers on the screen that any drop in view counts or followers is tantamount to an existential catastrophe.”*

Rebecca Jennings, a reporter covering internet culture at Vox, in her article *A TikTok House Divided*, discussing the rise (and fall) of TikTok “collab houses,” Vox.com, October 1, 2020.



I don’t know about you, but between the election and the pandemic I’m a little bit out of breath! One reason for this is the non-stop 24/7 barrage of information, misinformation, and arguing that endlessly comes at us about politics, Covid-19, and whatever else it is that we find on which to disagree. No doubt, you’ve engaged in conversations on these and other things with your kids, with those conversations ranging everywhere from agreeable to disagreeable.

Over the course of the last several months I have found myself thinking and speaking these words more frequently in conversations with myself and others: “I don’t know who or what to believe.” I have had a growing distrust in what I see from news and opinion outlets, and what I read that’s posted on social media. Does “fair and balanced” even exist anymore... from any side on any matter? “Spin”, imbalance, propaganda, and outright lies are no respecter of persons, ideologies, political bent, or information outlets.

I get especially frustrated when we - kids and adults included - get swept up in the current of what the Apostle Paul calls “the course of this world” (Ephesians 2:2), leaving our minds and the ability to discern between truth and lies at the door. Rather than seeking to evaluate everything under the microscope of Biblical truth, we simply choose to believe and embrace the “truth” we like in the moment, and jettison that which we choose not to believe. It was over 25 years ago that social critic Gene Veith wrote these words that so accurately foresaw our situation today: “With no absolute canons of objective truth, the rational is replaced by the aesthetic. We believe what we like.”<sup>i</sup>

WALT MUELLER, CPYU President



As Christians, we should know *and* do better. The Psalmist says of Scripture, “The sum of your word is truth” (Psalm 119:160). On the night before his death, Jesus prayed these words for his followers: “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth” (John 17:17). We must trust that “the needle of truth” still exists in the large “haystack” of information and opinion. How do we find it? We go to God’s Word. As you teach your kids to engage with the truths of God’s Word, teach them to pray these four prayers as they read:

1. **“Lord, show me you.”** We want to know *the truth* about our Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer.
2. **“Lord, show me me.”** We want to know *the truth* about ourselves, especially the truth about our need for a Savior to follow.
3. **“Lord, show me your plan for my life.”** We want to know *the truth* about God’s will and way for His followers.
4. **“Lord, show me the enemy’s lies, schemes, and strategies.”** We want to know *the truth* about the ways that Satan desires to derail us from faithfully following Jesus.

Parents, I love this challenge from Paul Tripp in his book *Parenting*: “You could argue that the chief reason God put parents in children’s lives is so that they would know him. The most important thing that a child could ever learn about is the existence, character, and plan of God.”<sup>ii</sup>

Lord, fill us and our children with your truth. ✱

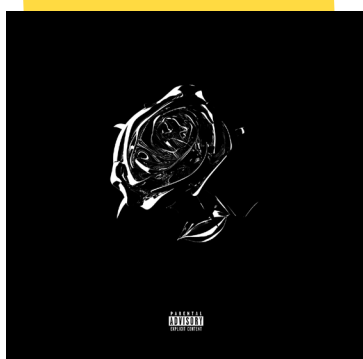
<sup>i</sup> Gene Veith, *Postmodern Times*, p. 176.

<sup>ii</sup> Paul Tripp, *Parenting*, p. 30.

TOP 10...

# Albums

*Billboard 200*  
Week of October 31, 2020



1. *Folklore* by Taylor Swift
2. *Shoot For The Stars, Aim For The Moon* by Pop Smoke
3. *Savage Mode II* by 21 Savage & Metro Boomin
4. *Legends Never Die* by Juice WRLD
5. *Wildflowers* by Tom Petty
6. *Resonance, Pt. 1* by NCT
7. *My Turn* by Lil Baby
8. *Hamilton: An American Musical* by Original Broadway Cast
9. *Tickets To My Downfall* by Machine Gun Kelly
10. *The Album* by BLACKPINK



## QUICK STATS

States which have implemented texting while driving bans have significantly lower overall crash death rates involving teen drivers.

(Pediatrics)

65% of teenagers are experiencing a disruption to their driver education because of COVID restrictions. 78% of parents are now teaching their teenagers how to drive.

(Governors Highway Safety Association)

## FROM THE NEWS:

# POLYAMORY

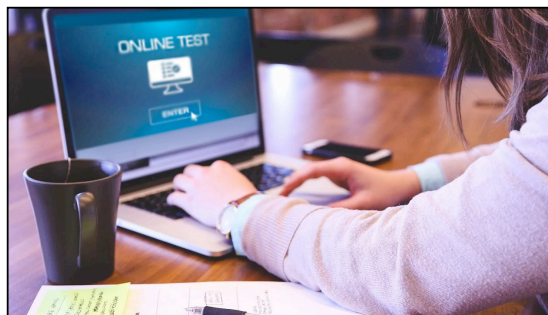
**Polyamory is a cultural trend that you need to be aware of.** The word polyamory comes from two Greek words, *poly* which means “many”, and *amor* which means “love.” In our contemporary situation, polyamory is the belief and practice of forming intimate relationships with more than one partner with the informed consent of all partners involved. It is also described as non-monogamy. It is consensual and seen as virtuous by those who are embracing and practicing this trend. Everything about polyamory goes against God’s good design for marriage, which has been instituted at creation as a monogamous life-long covenantal union between one man and one woman. Last summer, the city of Somerville, Massachusetts put a stamp of approval on polyamory by adopting a new domestic partnership ordinance that grants polyamorous households the rights held by spouses in a marriage. Parents, your role is to teach your kids to follow God’s design for love, sex, and marriage, rather than the cultural whims.



## TRENDS: COVID AND CHEATING

Parents, you need to be aware of a concerning aspect of online learning during these Covid-19 days. Researchers are reporting that there's been a rise in cheating and academic dishonesty as students engage with learning online. Because they are sitting alone in the privacy of their own home, students are able to switch between on-screen windows to look up test answers while they are taking online tests. And, in a twist from sneaking a look across a classroom aisle at a classmate's paper, kids are now messaging and texting each other in order to get answers.

Parents, you need to monitor and proctor your kids to make sure they aren't taking the easy and dishonest way out. And, you need to instill in them a love for God that results in them seeing academics as a form of worship where honesty is to be pursued. Proverbs 10:9 tells us, "Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but he who makes his ways crooked will be found out." Teach the truth about truthfulness to your kids.



## LATEST RESEARCH: EARLY ONSET PUBERTY

In his new book, *Girls on the Edge*, Dr. Leonard Sax describes four factors that he believes are putting girls at risk in today's rapidly changing culture. One of those factors is what he labels as "environmental toxins." Sax lists some of the environmental factors that are causing girls to enter puberty at a younger age. He mentions how what our girls eat will effect the onset of puberty, with

girls who eat high fat and high calorie diets experiencing puberty at earlier ages. Of course there are other factors at play. Pediatricians are now saying that the onset of puberty and breast development as early as age seven is within the normal range. Those of us raising girls need to be aware that earlier onset of puberty puts girls at risk of a

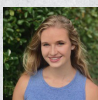
host of challenges, including anxiety, depression, sexual victimization, disordered eating, and substance abuse. We need to be diligent in supporting our girls and leading them through changes as we nurture them in the Lord.

### CPYU'S DIGITAL KIDS INITIATIVE

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



## Belief in Conspiracy Theories



by Théodora Dillman  
CPYU Intern

A recent *Wired* article, written from the perspective of a teen, highlights a growing trend: with the advent of TikTok and social media, teens are falling increasingly for conspiracy theories and "fake news" as perpetuated by the rapid spread of false information. While our devices and social media can be powerful tools in that they spread information quickly, they can also be a wolf in sheep's clothing. They can claim to offer the truth while instead offering and multiplying lies; sources report that lies on social media spread six times faster than truth does. As teens scroll through "news" flashing across their "For You" pages and social media feeds, we can help them be wise consumers. Remind teens that they are viewing curated content. Computer algorithms generate their feeds and "For You's" according to their clicks or the time they spend viewing certain pages. Thus, teens influence this content with their views, likes, and comments. Consequently, an eye-catching, attention-grabbing conspiracy theory quickly gathers popularity. And with its growing popularity, it gains redistribution and repetition. Help teens remember that redistributed, repeated and popularized information does not equate to truthful information. As they see and hear of "news" and trends, remind them to pause to weigh the validity of what they are consuming. Challenge teens to pause and *think*.

## 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 115** titled  
**"Sabbath" with A.J.  
Swoboda**

## FROM THE WORD

In a world where a variety of voices continually scream in our ears and summon our allegiance, where do we turn to learn the truth? The writer of Proverbs addressed this reality in ancient times, as the same struggle to know truth that exists now existed then.

In Proverbs 23:12 we are commanded to "apply" both our ears *and* our hearts to God's truth. The word translated "apply" means that we are to actively participate in the task of seeking out truth so that it might enter into our ears and then into our hearts. It is not just in seeking and hearing God's truth, but in embracing God's truth internally (in our hearts!) that we are changed and sent in the right direction. Our ears and our hearts are always to work together.

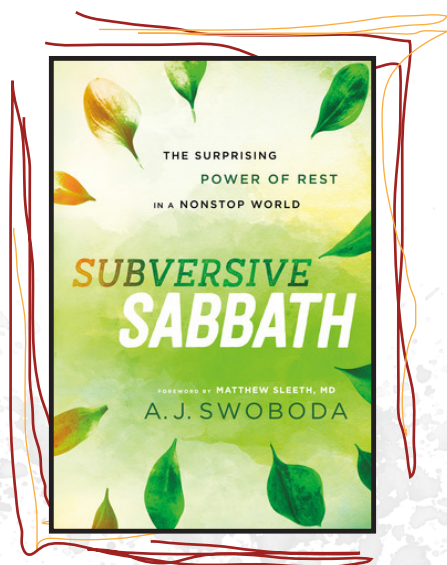
**"APPLY YOUR HEART  
TO INSTRUCTION AND  
YOUR EAR TO WORDS OF  
KNOWLEDGE."  
PROVERBS 23:12**

What responsibility do we as parents carry in the instruction of our kids? It's interesting that the word "instruction" in Proverbs 23:12 can be translated as "discipline", and it's the same word used in the next verse (Proverbs 23:13) when we are told, "Do not withhold discipline from a child." Parents, our role is to speak the truths of God's word to our kids through diligent instruction, while praying that God's Spirit would lead them to embrace what they hear in their hearts.

## HELPFUL RESOURCE ←

We live in a 24/7 culture of endless productivity, workaholism, distraction, burnout, and anxiety—a way of life to which we've sadly grown accustomed. This tired system of "life" ultimately destroys our souls, our bodies, our relationships, our society, and the rest of God's creation. The whole world grows exhausted because humanity has forgotten to enter into God's rest.

This book pioneers a creative path to an alternative way of existing. Combining creative storytelling, pastoral sensitivity, practical insight, and relevant academic research, *Subversive Sabbath: The Surprising Power of Rest in a Nonstop World* by A. J. Swoboda, offers a unique invitation to personal Sabbath-keeping that leads to fuller and more joyful lives. Swoboda demonstrates that Sabbath is both a spiritual discipline and a form of social justice, connects Sabbath-keeping to local communities, and explains how God may actually do more when we do less. He shows that the biblical practice of Sabbath-keeping is God's plan for the restoration and healing of all creation.



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