

CPYU PARENT PAGE

THE CENTER FOR PARENT/YOUTH
UNDERSTANDING

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

YOUTH CULTURE HOT QUOTE

“Media has been changing since the advent of the printing press. It’s always changing it’s always evolving, the way that we consume story. There was radio, then film, then television, then there were computers, and then there were video games, and now there’s VR, and now there’s streaming where you can watch things on-demand. It is obvious that the pandemic has hastened that change and tilted the balance to video games and streaming. Even the concept of what a blockbuster is has changed. You can have a blockbuster video game or streaming show and do it from the comfort of your own home, no matter how scary the world outside is. Stories are constantly evolving, and it’s perilous to say stories should always be consumed one way.”

David Goyer, film and TV screenwriter and writer for the ‘Call of Duty’ video game series, speaking about media and the current strength of video games, USA Today, November 21, 2020.



RECOVERING JOY

WALT MUELLER, CPYU President



Last month I was standing inside the doorway of my wife’s 3-year-old Sunday School class as one by one, Moms and Dads showed up to pick up their kids. Sometimes it’s difficult for the parents to peel their kids away from the end-of-class playtime they are experiencing with their peers. But on this day, one little 3-year-old girl looked up from her unbroken focus on the plastic fake kitchen to spot her father standing in the doorway. Immediately, she dropped everything she was doing, ran towards her Dad with her eyes focused on his, and announced loudly and with great excitement, “My Daddy’s here!! I have to go!!” What a treat it was to get to see her enthusiasm at the arrival of her father.

Watching that moment unfold has had me thinking quite a bit this week. Christmas is coming this month. We’ll be going through the normal preparations at our house – tree, lights, cooking, etc. – but I’ve been wondering if my joy at what it is we celebrate will increase to a higher level as I ponder the coming of the Savior in the midst of reeling from a year filled with brokenness. We’ve all experienced the fallout from Covid, a vicious election cycle, and various sorts of other cultural upheaval. Add to these the normal types of dark difficulties that fill our lives, and the Light of the World that came to dispel the darkness will be shining for us, I hope, much brighter. You and I have every reason to drop everything and scream, “My Daddy’s here!!”

Her unquestioned willingness to follow her Dad out of the room reminded me of a great memory from one of my own kids. When my son Josh was five years old, I was preparing for a trip away from home. Sadly anticipating my departure, he started to get antsy the day before I left. As I sat in my recliner reading the morning paper, he ran in a circle from the living room, through the

dining room, kitchen, and hallway, and then back to the living room again. On one of his passes, I looked up long enough to see him stop, get down on his hands and knees, and look frantically under the couch. My curiosity got the better of me, and I asked him what he was doing. “I’m looking for something, Dad. . . something I want to give you before you go away on your trip!” “What are you looking for, Josh? Maybe I can help you,” I said. “The round pointer, Dad. You know, that punkas. I’ll find it.” I had no clue what he was talking about. A few minutes passed, and his search brought him back downstairs. Then he yelled with excitement; he had found the object of his hunt.

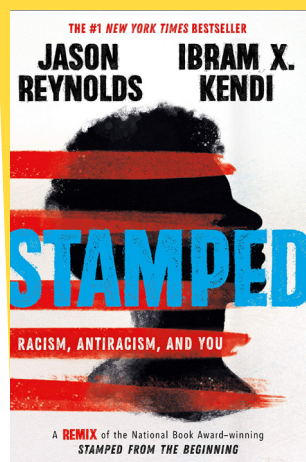
Seconds later he climbed up on my lap. “Dad, I want you to take this with you when you go on your trip.” In his hand was a tiny plastic compass. “Why do you want me to have this, Josh?” “Because, Dad, you are going away. I want you to keep my punkas in your pocket so that you know where you are from, where you belong, and how to get back home.”

Tears filled my eyes. I wasn’t scheduled to leave until the next day, and already I felt like I had been gone too long. I kept that “punkas” in my pocket the entire time I was gone. . . and I have carried it in my backpack ever since.

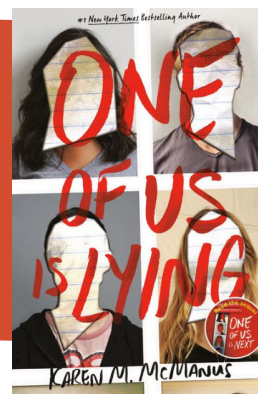
In a dark world where there are many “experts” sharing conflicting opinions on how to navigate these difficult days, it’s good to know that there is a “punkas” we can trust and follow, handed to us by the One who created life. That “punkas” is the Word, both the incarnate Word Jesus Christ, and the written Word, the Bible. Together, Jesus Christ and God’s revelation of Himself in the Bible reveals what we need to know about everything we encounter on the journey. Joy to the world! ★

Best-selling Young Adult Hardcover Books

Source:
New York Times



1. *Stamped* by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi
2. *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas
3. *A Cuban Girl's Guide to Tea and Tomorrow* by Laura Taylor Namey
4. *One Of Us Is Lying* by Karen M. McManus
5. *Children of Blood and Bone* by Tomi Adeyemi
6. *All This Time* by Mikki Daughtry and Rachael Lippincott
7. *Dear Justyce* by Nic Stone
8. *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* by Holly Jackson
9. *Kingdom of the Wicked* by Kerri Maniscalco
10. *Love & Olives* by Jenna Evans Welch



QUICK STATS

In 2015, 42% of 14-year-old girls and boys said they currently were trying to lose weight, compared to 30% in 2005.
(JAMA Pediatrics)

Girls who did not live with both parents from birth to age two were 38% more likely to begin their period before the age of 12 compared with girls who lived with both parents.
(BMC Pediatrics)

FROM THE NEWS:

THE LIKE BUTTON AND DEPRESSION

*If you've watched the compelling and eye-opening Netflix documentary, **The Social Dilemma**, you are familiar with Justin Rosenstein.* He is one of the many brilliant young tech developers who appear in the film to trumpet the personal and societal dangers caused by the very tools he helped create. The 37 year-old was the creator of the Facebook Like button, all with good intent. But now, Rosenstein is not only wary of social media, but is sounding a warning about how social media hijacks and changes our lives. New research from the University of Texas at Austin has connected Facebook's like button with heightened levels of depression and anxiety among adolescents. If a young person doesn't get enough likes on their posts, they tend to become emotionally distressed. Our kids are navigating a world where they need to be affirmed in their value and worth. It won't come from social media likes. It can only come from finding our place in this world as people made and loved by God.

TRENDS: CUTTING AS COOL

It seems as though teenagers have always been in pursuit of cool. The word “cool” has never gone out of style, as kids desire to fit in by adopting whatever it is that the cool kids are doing. In his new book, *Girls on the Edge*, Dr. Leonard Sax describes how girls today are pursuing cool in some very alarming ways. He recounts a conversation with an intervention specialist who has been working for years with girls who cut themselves as a way to deal with their emotional pain. Once limited to a very small and troubled fringe group of kids, cutting has moved into the mainstream. The intervention specialist told Dr. Sax that she is seeing a huge shift where cutting has become a social contagion. She says, “All the cool girls are doing it. They show off their cuts to the other girls, as a sign of how cool they are. It’s spreading like crazy.”

Parents, you need to keep an eye on your kids. If you see signs of cutting and self-injury, be sure to get counseling help from a qualified Christian counselor.



LATEST RESEARCH: FIGHTING ENTITLEMENT

The trend towards a sense of entitlement is especially prevalent among those children and teens who live on the receiving end of a silver spoon. On the other end are parents who feed their kids an endless parade of opportunities, activities, and things - all without ever having to work for any of it. These kids wind up believing that they will never have to work for anything, because, after all, they deserve it. A Harris Interactive Poll found that 90% of parents do think that it's important for their children to work to pay for the things they want. But the reality is that not that many kids had jobs. The survey found that there is a disconnect between the desired end result and what the kids are actually doing. The words of theologian John Wesley are worth teaching to our children:

“Work as hard as you can, to make all the money you can, to save as much as you can in order to give away all that you can.”



SEXUAL INTEGRITY INITIATIVE

A resource of CPYU and Project Six19

Transgender Regrets

by Walt Mueller



In today's rapidly changing youth culture landscape, more and more parents are being blind-sided by children who announce that they want to transition from their biological gender to the opposite gender. Known as gender-reassignment that's accomplished through hormone treatments and radical surgeries, there has been an argument made in the psychological community that patients experience mental health benefits after gender reassignment. Recently, the *American Journal of Psychiatry* issued a major correction to a prior study. They now say that neither gender reassignment hormone treatments nor gender reassignment surgeries reduce the need of transgender identifying people for mental health services. In her new book, *Irreversible Damage*, Abigail Shrier writes, “nearly all of the detransitioners I spoke with are plagued with regret.” Parents, in God's goodness and grace he has created us male and female. Teach your kids to listen to God's message on gender, rather than the culture's.

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 117:
"Another Gospel?"
with Alisa Childers

FROM THE WORD

What might a Psalm written about an ancient city have to say to us today? The reality is. . . alot. Psalm 48 is a celebration of Zion (Jerusalem) and the mountain on which the Temple stood. It represented the place where God made his presence known among the nation of Israel. The Psalmist surveys the city and recounts how what he sees represents God's protection and deliverance from Israel's enemies. It is a Psalm of praise to God that serves as a kind of "Declaration of Dependence."

But the Psalmist does not end with words of praise. Instead, he continues in verses 12 to 14 with words of instruction to his readers. They are to walk around, look carefully, and take in what it is that they see. Then, they are to remember what they see so that they might pass it on as a priceless spiritual inheritance to the next generation, and every subsequent generation thereafter. He wants them to both *know* and *tell* these truths: that God is the eternal God who faithfully guides His people as a loving Shepherd.

**"WALK ABOUT ZION, GO AROUND HER,
NUMBER HER TOWERS, CONSIDER
WELL HER RAMPARTS, GO THROUGH
HER CITADELS, THAT YOU MAY TELL
THE NEXT GENERATION THAT THIS IS
GOD, OUR GOD FOREVER AND EVER.
HE WILL GUIDE US FOREVER."**

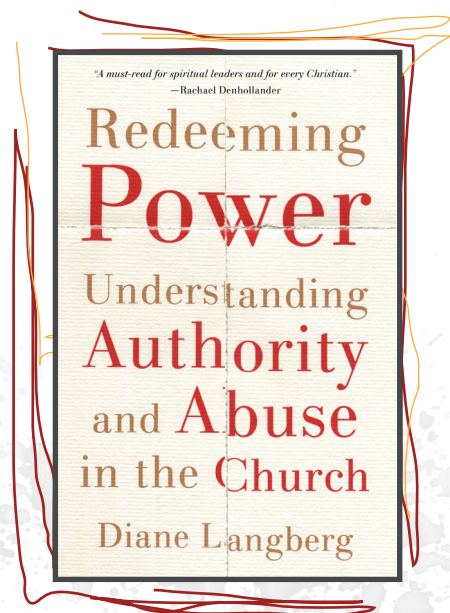
PSALM 48:12-14

Between reading about God's people in the Scriptures, reading church history, and looking in the mirror, there's no arguing that we are people prone to forget the Lord and His deeds. Parents, follow the Psalmist's instructions: Look around at what God has done. See the evidence of His faithful presence. Know what He has done for you. And then, tell it to your children.

HELPFUL RESOURCE ←

Power has a God-given role in human relationships and institutions, but it can lead to abuse when used in unhealthy ways. Speaking into current #metoo and #churchtoo conversations, *Redeeming Power: Understanding Authority and Abuse in the Church* shows that the body of Christ desperately needs to understand the forms power takes, how it is abused, and how to respond to abuses of power.

Although many Christians want to prevent abuse in their churches and organizations, they lack a deep and clear-eyed understanding of how power actually works. Internationally recognized psychologist Diane Langberg offers a clinical and theological framework for understanding how power operates, the effects of the abuse of power, and how power can be redeemed and restored to its proper God-given place in relationships and institutions. This book not only helps Christian leaders identify and resist abusive systems but also shows how they can use power to protect the vulnerable in their midst.



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