

YOUTH CULTURE HOT QUOTE

“We live in a world where people are so quick to speak and to comment. Silence is almost uncomfortable... Growing up being [labeled] ‘the quiet one’ puts you in a box and, even worse, makes you stand out when all you want is to blend in. But now I try to embrace and own it.”

Tennis star Naomi Osaka, talking about her decision to step away from tournament press events, athletes, and mental health, *Women’s Health*, August 23, 2021.



THE CENTER FOR PARENT/YOUTH UNDERSTANDING

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

Christmas Needs and Wants

WALT MUELLER, CPYU President



I was probably about 15 years-old when I finally got to the point where I knew not to use the word incorrectly in front of my dad. Slip-ups always seemed to result in a repeat performance of his well-rehearsed lecture on the difference between requirements and desires. The word I’m referring to is *need*.

If your growing-up experience was like mine, you often-times expressed your *wants* as *needs*. . . saying things like, “Hey Dad. I need these sneakers!” Or, “Hey Dad. I need this motorcycle.” (Yep, I said that). And, if you’re parenting experience is anything like mine, you’re raising kids who have a difficult time knowing the difference between *needs* and *wants*. . . and like me and my dad, you find yourself repeating that well-rehearsed corrective lecture over and over again!

Since Christmas is prime-time for our kids to express *wants* as *needs* through their Christmas lists, it’s also an excellent time to gently teach them how to discern between that which we require, and that which we desire. Paul Tripp reminds us that *need* is “one of the most frequently used words in human culture and one of the words used most sloppily.” We need to help our kids understand that a *need* is, as the dictionary says, something that “is essential or very important.” Most of what we erroneously classify as a *need* is actually a desire that has “become so precious and important to us that we have come to the point that we cannot conceive of being happy without them.”¹ If we dig down deep enough to see what lies beneath our confusing *wants* with *needs*, we can actually see what is ruling our hearts. In effect, we uncover the unique 21st century idols that capture our thoughts and allegiances.

As Christmas approaches, keep your eyes and ears open for teachable moments you can seize to help equip your kids to understand the difference between *wants* and *needs* both now, and for the rest of their lives. Here are some ways to make this happen over the coming weeks:

Listen carefully to the language they use. Help them to understand that *wants* are not necessarily bad things. God has given us so much in His world that He allows us to enjoy. But let them know that when *wants* turn into *needs* then we have allowed good things to become ultimate things. . . which is another way of describing idolatry.

Pay attention to and talk about commercials and ads that are designed to turn *wants* into *needs*. In our family, we will play a little game during commercials that’s called “spot the lie.” Watch commercials carefully and then talk about them. Work to identify the strategies, words, pictures, and ploys marketers use to morph *wants* into *needs*. In effect, you are teaching discernment!

Let them know that Christmas meets the most basic of all *wants* and *needs*. Ultimately, we all yearn to be in a relationship with our Creator. God sent Jesus into the world to restore that relationship and to put us on the trajectory of living every moment of our lives to the glory of God. And, as Augustine so correctly stated, “Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee.”

So. . . go ahead and do what I’ve done. Become your dad and your mom. Give the lecture. It’s desperately needed! ✱

¹ Paul Tripp, *New Morning Mercies*, p. November 22

Twitch Streamers

according to # of followers, as of November, 22 2021
Source: TwitchMetrics



1. **Ninja**
2. **Auronplay**
3. **Tfue**
4. **Rubius**
5. **Shroud**
6. **xQcOW**
7. **TheGrefg**
8. **ibai**
9. **pokimane**
10. **Heelmike**

QUICK STATS

High school students who participate in a universal screening program for depression are twice as likely to begin treatment for the disorder as those who do not.
(JAMA Network Open)

59% of teens listed “political divisions” as a major threat to their generation.
(Washington Post-Ipsos)

FROM THE NEWS:

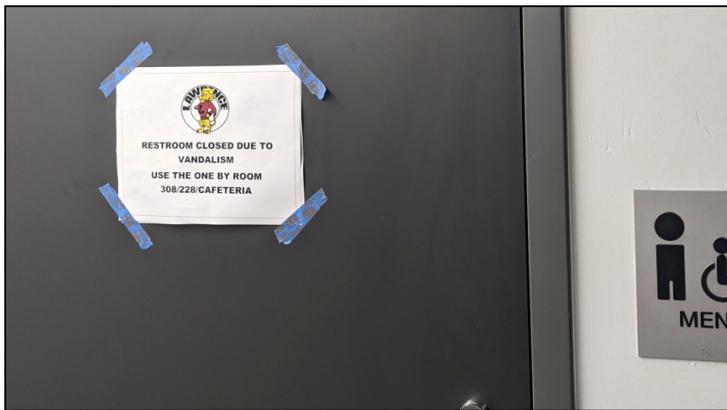
NO MORE BULLPEN?

As baseball’s World Series was unfolding, the folks at People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals announced a campaign to change the long-standing name of baseball’s bullpen to the arm-pen. Their reasoning? The name bullpen is insensitive to the bovine population as it refers to the holding pens where cows are kept before slaughter. In baseball, a team’s relief pitchers stay in the bullpen as they wait to be called into a game. Now you might shake your head in disbelief at PETA’s campaign, but for many in today’s world this is serious business. This could include your kids as they are influenced by a cultural narrative that dehumanizes human beings, while humanizing the animal world. Take some time to address this story with your kids. Go back and read Genesis chapters one and two to gain perspective on God’s good creation of animals, along with the creation of his image-bearers who are to exercise responsible dominion over God’s creatures.

TRENDS:

DEVIOUS LICKS CHALLENGE

Recently, school administrators across the country have had to lockdown school bathrooms. The problem is disappearing mirrors, soap dispensers, towel holders, and even toilets as students engage in the latest TikTok challenge known as the devious licks challenge. To meet the challenge, students were initially posting videos of themselves vandalizing and stealing items stolen from their school bathrooms. Now, the challenge has ramped up as they steal from other areas of the school, taking signs, desks, and other fixtures while posting those videos with the #deviouslicks. For



Christian parents, our role is to be aware of this trend, to teach our kids the way and will of God regarding stealing, and to respond to what they're posting online.

LATEST RESEARCH:

HOW KIDS SPEND THEIR MONEY

It's been said: "You tell me who or what you daydream about, and I'll tell you who or what your god is." Another way to put it is how we spend our money reveals both our priorities *and* who we are. Consider as well what Jesus says in Matthew 6:21: "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Looking at the way our kids spend their money reveals not only who they are, but who their gods are as well. The folks at Piper Sandler marketing tell us in their latest research that teen spending is up six percent since the spring of this year. Our boys spend the most on food, clothing, and video game systems, in that order. For our girls its clothing, food, and personal care. We need to push back on the cultural narrative and teach our kids that our money and possessions belong to God. Our role is to steward those resources to His glory. How would our spending habits change if we believed that to be true?

Needs, Wants, Kids and Marketing Manipulation

by Walt Mueller



Did you know that it is estimated that the average person sees between 6,000 and 10,000 ads every single day?!? Does all this marketing work? How many products or brands can you identify just by seeing their logos or hearing their jingles? Take for example the now famous Nike "swoosh." All people have to do is see the swoosh, and they know whose product is being peddled. How many men can identify the Monday Night Football brand just by hearing the first four notes of the theme song? Marketing is so effective that research now shows kids can recognize logos by eighteen months, and before reaching their second birthday they're asking for products for brand name.

No doubt – advertising works, and our kids are especially vulnerable to marketers' efforts to not only sell products, but to sell a worldview. One component of that worldview is the manipulation of kids into creating needs and wants that really shouldn't be needs and wants.

Why not make commercial viewing a discipleship experience for you and your kids? Use commercial viewing as an opportunity to teach kids how to apply their faith to the glut of marketing messages they face each and every day. You will be teaching them to think critically and Christianly about the commercials they encounter. You will help them see how marketing manipulates them into creating dangerous desires while feeding materialism. We've put together a free teaching tool for you to use to this end, *The Simple Seven Ad Filtering Questions*, which you can download by scanning the QR Code to the left.

New Podcast

The Word in Youth Ministry

is a podcast from CPYU for youth workers by youth workers.



Listen at
www.cpyu.org/twiyw

Be sure to check out
Episode 15
“Technology”

FROM THE WORD

Sometime during the coming weeks, why not sit down with your family to read Luke’s Gospel account of the birth of Jesus Christ? Spend some time pondering what Luke recounts happening eight days after Christ’s birth. According to Jewish custom, Mary and Joseph brought their baby son to Jerusalem to be circumcised. While there, they took Jesus into the temple where an upright man by the name of Simeon took the infant in his arms. God had promised Simeon that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah with his own eyes. As he looks upon Jesus, Simeon says, “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.” Imagine the joy that Simeon felt!

“SOVEREIGN LORD, AS YOU HAVE PROMISED, YOU NOW DISMISS YOUR SERVANT IN PEACE. FOR MY EYES HAVE SEEN YOUR SALVATION. . .”
LUKE 2:29&30

We live in a day and age where everyone around us is on an eager quest for meaning and purpose in life. That’s certainly true for our children and teens. As you celebrate the coming of the God-Man Jesus Christ into the world, pray that your children and teens would see and experience His salvation and the great joy that comes with knowing Jesus Christ.

HELPFUL RESOURCE ←

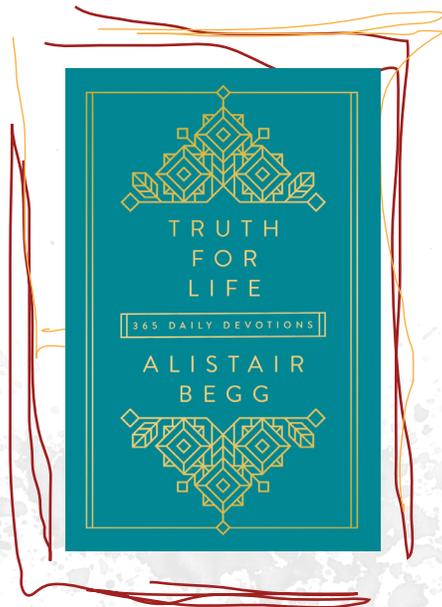
Start with the gospel each and every day with *Truth for Life: 365 Daily Devotions* by renowned Bible teacher Alistair Begg.

Each daily devotion includes:

- Reflections from renowned Bible teacher Alistair Begg
- Prompts for real life application
- Relevant Scripture passages
- A yearly Bible reading plan

We all need to be reminded of the truth that anchors our life and equips us to live for Christ. Reflecting on a short passage each day, Alistair spans the Scriptures to show us the greatness and grace of God, and to thrill our hearts to live as His children. His clear, faithful exposition and thoughtful application mean that this resource will both engage your mind and stir your heart.

If you’d like to read and discuss with others in community, search for the Facebook Group “CPYU Together in the Word.”



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