

CPYU PARENT PAGE

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HELPING PARENTS
UNDERSTAND TEENAGERS
AND THEIR WORLD



"Don't be foolish!" I heard that spoken in my direction more than a few times when I was a kid. My dad was never one to hold back in those times when my adolescent self believed that I was on a good trajectory, and he believed my decisions were leading down the road to disaster. Yes, his warnings did serve to dissuade me from time-to-time. But truth be told, there were more times than I'd like to admit that when thinking my dad the ignorant fool, I would go ahead with what I thought was my wisely conceived fool-proof plan. It was in those times that somehow Dad's ignored warnings always wound up proving true and necessary. Why did he always have to be right?!

I'm sure that all of us, if we're honest, can look back to our childhood and see how we're each "Exhibit A" for what we read in Proverbs 22:15: "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child." Those ancient words hold true for every generation of kids. Because of this, we need to be diligent in parenting our own children and teens away from the foolishness we so easily embrace, while pointing them to living wisely.

Parenting to instill wisdom has been on my mind since I began reading Timothy Keller's little one-year devotional on the Book of Proverbs – *God's Wisdom For Navigating Life*. Keller tells us that "A proverb is a poetic, terse, vivid, thought-provoking saying that conveys a world of truth in a few words." The Proverbs we've been given in the Bible are the corrective flip side to my Dad's "Don't be foolish!" They tell us, "Do be wise!" Wisdom, as Keller tells us, "is making the right choice even when there are no clear moral laws telling you explicitly what to do." And right out of the gate, the writer of Proverbs implores his son to "hear your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching."

In an effort to teach our kids how to embrace living wisely, we need to also teach our kids about the lifestyle of foolishness they are to avoid. We need to help our kids learn what it means to "Don't be foolish!" by helping them understand what it means to be a fool. We can do this by helping them understand the four types of "unwise" people we meet in Proverbs.

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YOUTH CULTURE

HOT QUOTE

Dr. Sarah White, Director, Quit Victoria, a smoking quitline service in Australia, discussing the addictive nature of e-cigarettes amidst a surge of 13-year-olds calling the quitline seeking help to quit vaping.

The Guardian, October 26, 2022.

"When you smoke a cigarette, you have 10 or 15 puffs, and then you stop and you throw it away. You can look at the packet and say 'I've got ten left'. But with e-cigarettes we're talking about up to 2,400 puffs per pen. So that's 240 cigarettes, and there's no natural stopping point."



"THE ULTIMATE FOOLISHNESS IS TO MAKE ANYTHING THE CENTER OF OUR LIVES BESIDES GOD."



Timothy Keller

First, there is *the fool*. This is the person who is obstinate, highly opinionated, and always right/wise in their own eyes. Lacking a teachable spirit, they don't want to learn or be corrected. They choose not to reflect on situations and options. Rather, they forge ahead enslaved to themselves. In many ways, this sounds like what we've come to call "normal adolescent development."

Second, there is *the simple*. This is the person who is gullible and easily led as they believe anything and everything. They are mentally and spiritually naïve. Consequently, they tend to irresponsibly go with the flow. This sounds like those teenagers who desperately want to fit in and consequently are prone to being misled.

Third, there is *the scoffer*. Full of a kind of pride that hates submitting to anyone but themselves, they are also known as "mockers." In the adolescent population, the scoffer can take on a leadership role by appearing as worldly-wise and sophisticate. These are the alpha-dogs and pied pipers who take the lead on the path to foolishness.

Finally, there is *the sluggard*. Lazy to the core, the sluggard rarely begins things. When he does, he never finishes. He comes to believe his own excuses and rationalizes his laziness. Eventually, he feels helpless to move forward as a result of his procrastination and resulting disorder of his life. Social theorists, educators, and researchers are constantly reminding us that entitlement and narcissism are on the rise, which feed the roots of laziness.

What then does this mean for us as we parent our kids in today's youth culture?

First, recognize that in many ways, the foolishness that we've just described is actually encouraged and celebrated in today's world. Yes, it's part of the cultural narrative. Mantras like "you do you" and "follow your heart" are just another way of leading our kids to believe that the wisest people are those who choose to be fools. That's a narrative we need to expose and point out.

Second, we need to deliberately model and teach Godly wisdom. In his opening introduction to the Book of Proverbs, Solomon tell us that the wise embrace wisdom and instruction. What we need to realize is that wisdom and instruction cannot be embraced unless we are making and taking every opportunity to expose foolishness and to teach wisdom.

Finally, learning and prayer are crucial elements of Christian parenting in today's world. We can only know what to teach about wisdom when we are actively seeking to study, know, and apply the wisdom of God's Word in our own lives. And, we must pray that our kids would have hearts bent on seeking and following God's wise ways.

Timothy Keller tells us that "the ultimate foolishness is to make anything the center of our lives besides God." That's a priceless nugget of truth and wisdom!

WALT MUELLER
CPYU President



FROM THE NEWS

AMERICAN GIRL DOLLS AND GENDER TRANSITION

Late last year, popular doll maker American Girl released a new book for girls.

It's titled, *A Smart Girls Guide: Body Image Book - How to Love Yourself, Live Life to the Fullest, and Celebrate all Kinds of Bodies*. The book's description tells us that every girl needs to learn to live comfortably in her own skin. The book's message that all body types are worthy of love and respect is a much-needed pushback on a culture that glorifies model-type bodies, objectification, and the kind of pressures that have led to an epidemic of body dysmorphic disorders in our kids. But the book goes a step further and tells girls that if they haven't yet gone through puberty and they want to make changes, they can talk to a doctor about securing medicine that delays body changes until they have more time to think about their gender identity. Parents, even in the world of play our kids are learning a narrative about gender self-determination, rather than following God's good design of male and female.

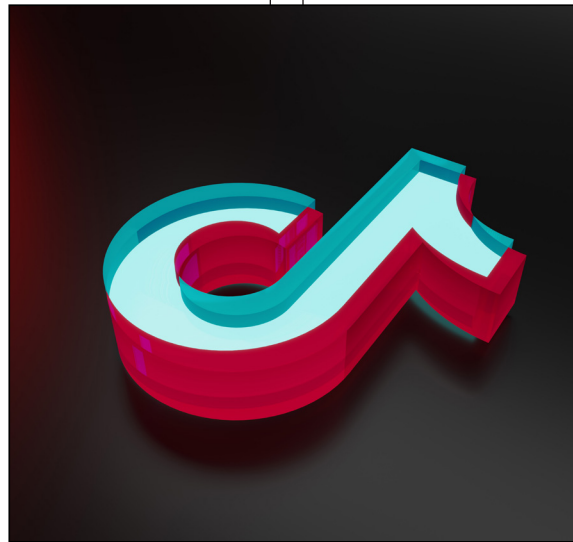


TRENDS:



Body Checking

One of the latest social media trends on TikTok, Instagram and other platforms is the posting of photos by young women showing their abs and protruding hip bones. These posts are often times accompanied with #bodychecking, and they feature comments from people comparing their weight and shape to that of the person who posted the photo. This new trend is known as digital body checking, which experts say is a compulsive behavior where individuals are constantly checking their weight, shape, and appearance. It is one more evidence of the growing obsession our culture puts on physical appearances, which in turn feeds a host of body dysmorphic disorders. Digital body checking is also fueling the growing and destructive trend of comparison, not only among our young girls, but among grown women as well. We need to remind ourselves and our kids that our focus should first and foremost be on developing our walk with the Lord, and pursuing spiritual maturity.



LATEST RESEARCH:

Family Structure and Screen Time

According to the most recent research from the Institute for Family Studies, the amount of time kids ages 11-18 spend on digital media is clearly linked to the type of family structure in which a teen is growing up. Teens who are growing up in a single-parent home or step-family are spending just under 11 hours a day engaged with digital media. Researchers also found that teens from intact families where they live with both biological parents, are spending considerably less time per day on digital media. While you might expect that to be the case, what's surprising and should be concerning is that kids in intact homes are still spending a whopping 9 hours a day engaged with digital media. For both

groups, the time online is spent gaming, texting, video chatting, shopping, and interacting with social media. Parents, we have a responsibility to teach our kids to use their time wisely. In Ephesians 5:16 we are told to make the best use of our time, because the days are evil.



QUICKSTATS



Researchers found that 24% of young people engage in unsafe listening practices when using ear buds and that over 1 billion people worldwide ages 12-34 could be at risk of noise-induced hearing loss. *(British Medical Journal of Global Health)*

The following 4 home environment factors were identified by researchers as the most associated with favorable outcomes for children: 1) 2 parents committed to one another through marriage; 2) a stable home life; 3) sufficient economic resources; and 4) the children are welcome by parents who actively desire to learn how to parent. *("Rebalancing Children First" report by the American Enterprise Institute and the Brookings Institution)*

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OSCAR BEST PICTURE NOMINEES

*Nominations for
Best Picture at the
95th Academy Awards
(in no particular order)*

1. Everything Everywhere All at Once
2. The Banshees of Inisherin
3. The Fabelmans
4. Elvis
5. Tár
6. Top Gun: Maverick
7. Avatar: The Way of Water
8. Women Talking
9. All Quiet on the Western Front
10. Triangle of Sadness



SUPER BOWL ADVERTISING

by WALT MUELLER

With the Super Bowl happening this month there's excitement building not only about the game, but about all the new commercials that will air. This year's cost to marketers? Seven million dollars for a thirty-second spot.

As always, we suggest that you take the opportunity to make your Super Bowl watching experience a teachable moment for your kids. Use it as an opportunity to teach them how to apply their faith to the glut of marketing messages they face each day.

We suggest that you filter every ad through these seven questions.

1. What product is this ad selling?
2. What besides the product does this ad sell? (ideas, lifestyle, worldview, behaviors, etc.)
3. What's the hook and the bait?
4. What does the ad promise the product will do for you?
5. Does the ad tell the truth?
6. Does the ad tell a lie?
7. How does this ad and its messages agree or disagree with God's Word and what does that mean for me?

Parents, teach your kids to exercise biblical discernment.

FROM THE WORD



he opening verses of Proverbs remind us of our need to nurture ourselves and our children into prudence, knowledge, and discretion. These three virtues combine in ways that when present, result in living a wise life marked by taking the time to think, plan, and live strategically to the glory of

God. One skill we must learn to make this happen is the skill of taking a purposeful pause whenever we are making a decision. Two things in our culture push against this way of life.

First, we are result oriented and used to living in the immediacy of the moment. Our life. . . even our spiritual lives and church lives. . . are like one big spread sheet. Give me results and give me results now. To wait, we believe, is to fail. As a result, we so easily jump into the mistake of playing God, even though our intentions might be right. Those of us who are list-makers and list-crosser-offers need to be especially cognizant of this tendency.

Second, we are encouraged to feel our way rather than to think our way into making decisions and planning courses of action. "Just follow your heart" . . . perhaps there isn't a more dangerous mantra out there than that one.


Parents, patience and prayer are necessary skills to embrace in your own life, and to teach to your kids.

"The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel: To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity; to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth."

Proverbs 1:1-4

PODCAST




The WORD
in Youth Ministry

A CPYU PODCAST

The Word in Youth Ministry

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

BE SURE TO CHECK OUT EPISODE 44:
"TEACHING THE OLD TESTAMENT TO STUDENTS" WITH MITCHELL CHASE

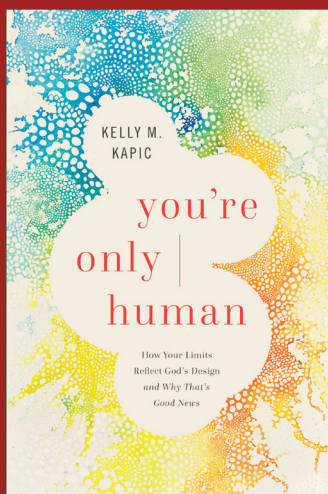


LISTEN AT WWW.CPYU.ORG/TWIYM

"Our culture in the West, even as it glorifies radical individualism, fosters far more of a herd mentality than most realize. What an irony that our modern age on the one hand exhausts us by its calls for complete self-expression and, on the other hand, suffocates us by its pressures to conform. We must constantly adopt ever-changing fashions, humor, and music, and yet keep up the appearance that we are independently minded. This tension fuels our economy—and our insecurities!"

- Kelly Kaptic

HELPFUL RESOURCES



BOOK

Work. Family. Church. Exercise. Sleep.

The list of demands on our time seems to be never ending. It can leave you feeling a little guilty - like you should always be doing one more thing.

Rather than sharing better time-management tips to squeeze more hours out of the day, Kelly Kaptic takes a different approach in ***You're Only Human: How Your Limits Reflect God's Design and Why That's Good News***. He offers a better way to make peace with the fact that God didn't create us to do it all.

Kaptic explores the theology behind seeing our human limitations as a gift rather than a deficiency. He lays out a path to holistic living with healthy self-understanding, life-giving relationships, and meaningful contributions to the world. He frees us from confusing our limitations with sin and instead invites us to rest in the joy and relief of knowing that God can use our limitations to foster freedom, joy, growth, and community.

Readers will emerge better equipped to cultivate a life that fosters gratitude, rest, and faithful service to God.