

# CPYU PARENT PAGE

# 321

HELPING PARENTS  
UNDERSTAND TEENAGERS  
AND THEIR WORLD



## CAR WRECK COMMITMENT

It was 55 years ago this month that my 11-year-old self drove a car into a mailbox. Here's the backstory: For several years our family had made it a tradition to attend the local Soap Box Derby race during our summer vacations in St. Petersburg, Florida. I was always sitting wide-eyed in the stands as I watched boys aged 11 to 15 crouch down behind the wheel to race their home-built gravity-fueled cars two-at-a-time down a hill. I loved it! Somehow watching the cars hit speeds of up to 35 miles an hour as they came down to the finish line through a gauntlet of hundreds of cheering fans was like a bug that got into my system. Someday, I thought, I'm going to do this in order for people to watch and cheer for me. In my mind I saw myself standing on the victory podium, all smiles as the crowd cheered for me!

Imagine my joy when we learned that the Soap Box Derby was scheduled to be held in our area in the summer of 1968. My Dad was all for it and we attended the sign-up meeting where we paid \$20 for the standardized wheels, axles, and steering wheel along with getting a rundown of car specs and the rules. Parents could supervise, but the kids needed to do all the hands-on building.

When the day of the big race arrived, we transported my looks-like-an-11-year-old-built-it baby blue car to the top of the hill that had been closed for the race. Dozens of kids and their cars lined up, waiting their turn for the elimination heats which would ultimately yield one champion who would move on to Akron, Ohio just a few weeks later for the televised national Soap Box Derby championship. Looking down the hill I was nervous, but I could taste the glory that awaited!

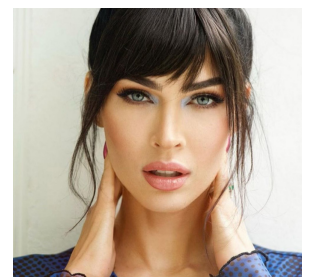
Reality wound up being far different than my dreams. Long story short, I was placed on the ramp a little bit crooked. Never having driven my car down any kind of test hill before, I wound up weaving back and forth across the hill, correcting then over-correcting with my increasingly out-of-control car picking up speed as it was sling-shotting back and forth. The good news is that even though I probably drove twice as far as my competitor, his car was so slow that I crossed the finish line first. But for some reason, I turned my wheel hard to the left, cutting across in front of the other car and almost turning a full 180-degrees before going head-on into

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YOUTH  
CULTURE

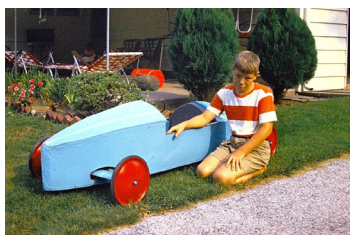
HOT  
QUOTE

**Actress Megan Fox, talking about how she perceives herself.**  
*"I don't ever see myself the way other people see me. There's never a point in my life where I loved my body, never ever. When I was little, that was an obsession I had of like, 'But I should look this way.' And why I had an awareness of my body that young, I'm not sure."*



A video interview with  
*Sports Illustrated*,  
May 15, 2023

**"THE LESSONS I LEARNED DURING THOSE ENDLESS HOURS OF BUILDING THAT CAR WAY BACK IN 1968 CONTINUE TO ECHO EVERY DAY, REMINDING ME THAT I AM TO REMAIN STEADFASTLY DEVOTED TO MY WIFE, TO MY CHILDREN, AND TO ANY TASK TO WHICH GOD HAS CALLED ME. . . EVEN WHEN I DON'T FEEL LIKE IT."**



a mailbox post. Rattled and with a bent axle, I decided I had had enough. No more racing for me that day, even though I was offered a replacement axle.

The reason I'm sharing this story is not about the race, but about what happened during the months between signing up for the race, and the race itself. Glory-hunter that I was, I decided about one-week into building the car that this was not only time-consuming hard work, but boring. I wanted to be out playing with my friends rather than taking on the long and tedious task of building that car. But even through my tears of protest, my dad made one thing clear: *"You are not quitting. You are finishing what you started. You made a commitment."* So, for what seemed like an eternity, my dad pushed and pulled my miserable self to finish that car. I hated every minute of it. But looking back, I loved every lesson learned about commitment thanks to my dad's resolve to make the process a teachable moment. . . a very *long* teachable moment.

In a world where we're told that we coddle our kids way too much these days, our kids need parents who - like my dad - won't back down and who are committed to teaching commitment. The dictionary tells us that commitment is an agreement or pledge to do something. It's an unwavering devotion, dedication, steadfastness, and loyalty to someone or something. This kind of commitment must be learned by

our kids today, just as it had to be learned by me, because we are more prone to listen to our feelings than to the promises we've made. Listen to your feelings long enough and jumping from thing-to-thing while avoiding the life-shaping hard stuff becomes a habit that's destined to slowly destroy you over the course of the rest of your life.

For me, the lessons I learned during those endless hours of building that car way back in 1968 continue to echo every day, reminding me that I am to remain steadfastly devoted to my wife, to my children, and to any task to which God has called me. . . even when I don't feel like it. But even more than that, my dad's unwavering commitment to teaching me to keep my commitments has served to remind me of the wholehearted devotion Jesus requires of His followers. In Luke 9:62 Jesus reminds us that "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." Commitment to Jesus Christ and His Kingdom is a matter of #1 priority for anyone to be his disciple.

Parents, teach this big lesson of commitment to your kids by teaching commitment in all those little moments where your kids push on you to let them call it quits.

**WALT MUELLER**  
CPYU President



## FROM THE NEWS

### CALAMITALYSIS

**There was a recent contest where teenagers were encouraged to invent a new word.**

Many of the respondents created words that reflect the reality of teenage life in today's rapidly changing world. One of the words that caught our attention was this: calamitalysis. The word's inventor defines calamitalysis as a debilitating stress or anxiety, derived from hopelessness about the terrifying problems of the world. With mental health issues like stress and anxiety on the rise among our kids, we won't be surprised if calamitalysis catches on as an everyday word. This offers us a great opportunity to lead our kids into an understanding of God's promised peace, protection, and presence for those who are in a relationship with him through Jesus Christ. We need to teach our kids that Jesus says, "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Without Jesus, we consign ourselves to a life of calamitalysis.





## TRENDS:



## PRIME Energy Drinks

With over 23 million subscribers to his YouTube channel, actor and professional wrestler Logan Paul is a true celebrity influencer. Evidence of his influence among our kids is the popularity of his line of energy drinks, known as PRIME. The drink is so popular among middle schoolers that it's selling out, and parents of kids obsessed with the brand are looking everywhere for it. The drink is pricey and can cost several dollars per bottle. Some kids have created a second-hand market where they resell the bottles to friends at school at jacked-up prices. The drink's colorful packaging and fancy names like Meta Moon and Ice Pop, make them particularly marketable to kids. Parents, you need to be aware that dieticians are issuing warnings about PRIME, as it contains about two hundred milligrams of caffeine, which is twice that of a Red Bull or Monster. They are warning that they can be addictive, cause depression, insomnia, irregular heartbeats, and high blood pressure. Parents, beware.



## LATEST RESEARCH:

## Mortality Rate for Children

A recent report in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* tells us that the mortality rate for children ages one to nineteen increased by almost 11% between 2019 and 2020, and an additional 8% between 2020 and 2021. Most of the upsurge was due

to the deaths among older children ages 10 to 19. The increased rates in this age group was attributable to increases in suicide, homicide, vehicle accidents, and drug overdoses. Because all of us face the reality of death, it's important that we understand death in light of God's story. Those who are in Christ have great hope in the reality of life after death. Consider these comforting words from the Heidelberg Catechism.

"What is your only comfort in life and death? That I am not my own, but belong body and soul, both in life and in death, to my faithful savior Jesus Christ!" Parents, teach your children the hopeful truths of the Gospel so that they too, might find comfort in life and in death.



## QUICKSTATS



According to a study of 2,000 British parents with children at home, the typical family spends just 6 hours together a week.

(OnePoll on behalf of McCain Foods)

Teenagers age 15 to 19 are expected to make up 18% of all summer hires, up from just 2% in 2019, before the pandemic began. The share of 16 to 19-year-olds working or job hunting hit nearly 37% for all of last year, the highest since 2009.

(Gusto and U.S. Department of Labor)

III TOP III

10



## STREAMING SERVICES

1. YouTube
2. Netflix
3. Hulu
4. Prime Video
5. Disney+
6. tubi
7. HBO Max
8. Peacock
9. Roku Channel
10. pluto TV

May 2023  
Source: Nielsen



## NAME, IMAGE, AND LIKENESS

by WALT MUELLER

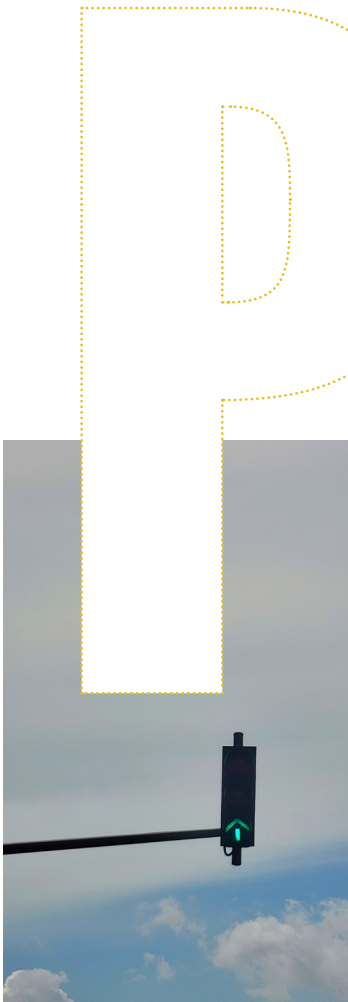
I recently received this text message from a high school coach I know: "Would you please make people aware of high school athletes and the NIL deals? Something has to be done. It's getting out of hand."

In case you're unfamiliar to what this coach is referring to, NIL is an acronym that stands for name, image, and likeness. You see, just like pro athletes, high school athletes are now signing sponsorship and endorsement deals with major companies like Nike and others, to use their name, image, and likeness to market and promote products.

California was the first state to allow NIL deals with high school athletes, and now twenty other states are doing the same. Bronny James, son of LeBron James, already has \$7.5 million in reported NIL deals.

Of course, there are many concerns regarding this trend. It's evidence of our materialism and commercialism. In addition, it undermines play, making it a money-making endeavor. Sports are not to replace our worship of God.

# FROM THE WORD



Picture in your mind the scenario recorded in Luke 9:57-62 “as they were going along the road.” Jesus is walking along and some people come to him to announce their readiness to enter into the fold of his followers. None of them in these verses really understand the level of radical commitment required to be a follower of Jesus. This isn’t some on-again-off-again when-I’m-in-the-mood lifestyle.

Jesus makes it clear that those who are called to follow him must give up their desire for a quiet and luxurious lifestyle. In fact, don’t expect material security when you enter into a life of radical commitment to Jesus. In addition, we need to put other diversions and tasks aside that would hinder or delay us from fulfilling our commitment to Jesus. And finally, Jesus tells us that we are not to look back when instead we are called to go forward.

Our human tendency is to allow our hearts to be divided. We say we are committed to Jesus but other things can cloud our vision and undo our commitments. In essence we quit. But in this passage Jesus reminds us that he knows our human nature. He knows that if we allow our hearts to be divided we will ultimately fall.

With David we must pray and teach our kids to pray, “Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may rely on your faithfulness; Give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name” (Psalm 86:11).

“Another said, ‘I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home.’ Jesus said to him, ‘No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.’”

**Luke 9:61-62**

## PODCAST



### Youth Culture Matters

A CPYU PODCAST

#### *Youth Culture Matters*

*is a long-format podcast from CPYU hosted by Walt Mueller.*

#### **BE SURE TO CHECK OUT EPISODE 168:**

**“THE LIFE, IMPACT, AND LEGACY OF TIM KELLER”**

**LISTEN AT [WWW.CPYU.ORG/PODCAST](http://WWW.CPYU.ORG/PODCAST)**



"If I'm saved by grace alone, then the motive behind my cultural choices is not to keep rules to somehow impress God or prove myself worthy but to love and honour God because of what he's already done for me."

- Daniel Strange

## HELPFUL RESOURCES



BOOK

Whether it's TV boxsets, Instagram stories or historical novels, we all consume culture. So it's important that we are neither bewitched by it—buying into everything it tells us—or bewildered by it—lashing out in judgment or retreating into a Christian bubble.

In *Plugged In: Connecting your faith with what you watch, read, and play*, Dan Strange encourages Christians to engage with everything they watch, read and play in a positive and discerning way. He also teaches Christians how to think and speak about culture in a way that plugs in to a bigger and better reality—the story of King Jesus, and his cosmic plan for the world.

It's possible to watch TV and read novels and play video games in a way that actually feeds our faith, rather than withers it. It's even possible for you—yes, you—to be that person who starts off talking to a mate about last night's football game and ends up talking about Jesus.

So be equipped to engage with culture in a way that helps your relationship with Christ and points others to him.