



PRIORITIZING FAITH

School days will soon be upon us and if your family is like most, your kids are involved in all kinds of extra-curricular activities that keep you running from here, to there, to everywhere. If we're not careful, the school year will come and go so fast that we might get to June and realize we've pushed aside or even forgotten that our primary calling as Christian parents is not to serve our kids, but to serve our Lord by making the spiritual nurture of our kids our first priority.

With that in mind, here are four reminders that I trust will help you daily fulfill that nurturing responsibility in ways that will yield spiritual growth in your children and teens.

First, keep the main thing the main thing. I've heard it said that a parent's checkbook and calendar are clear indicators of their parenting priorities.

Go ahead and conduct an informal audit of both. Then honestly assess what that audit tells you about what you are communicating to your kids about what *is* and *should* be most important in life. Are they learning that following Jesus is just one more activity in a long list of things? Or, are they learning that following Jesus is the over-arching quest in life that should dictate everything else, including how we spend our time and money?

Second, engage in idol-smashing. We might not ever set up and worship a literal golden cow, but the reality is that in today's culture, there are more idols than ever before that clamor for our attention and allegiance. Idolatry enters into our lives when we take a good and wonderfully created thing that's been given to us by God, and we turn it into an ultimate thing that becomes an object

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YOUTH CULTURE

HOT QUOTE

danah boyd, a partner researcher at Microsoft Research, speaking about the Skibidi Toilet video trend, as interviewed in an article about the animated YouTube series, related games, and countless fan created spinoffs, Wired.com, June 10, 2024.

"It was initially appealing to young people for its utter weirdness. Parents (and many other adults) probably reacted with revulsion, as they've done many other times. That revulsion from adults makes it even more appealing to young people."



"IF YOU'RE GOD'S CHILD, THE GOSPEL ISN'T AN ASPECT OF YOUR LIFE, IT IS YOUR LIFE; THAT IS, IT IS THE WINDOW THROUGH WHICH YOU LOOK AT EVERYTHING."



Paul Tripp

of our worship. James tells us that "every good and perfect gift is from above" (James 1:17). God has given us the goodness of created things not so they will become objects that we worship, but to point to our Creator (the giver of all good things) and spark our ongoing worship of Him. Whether it's your children, your social standing, your online image, your kids' grades and achievements, etc. . . "flee from idolatry" (I Corinthians 10:14).

Third, teach your kids to integrate their faith into *all* of life. God calls us to follow Him in every nook, cranny, and square inch of life. Paul Tripp writes, "If you're God's child, the gospel isn't an aspect of your life, it is your life; that is, it is the window through which you look at everything." Tripp challenges us to see the Gospel not only as an entry point (coming to faith) and an exit point (going to heaven), but as something for the here and now that should shape our identity, pursuits, and struggles. Are you teaching your kids how

to integrate their faith into their academics, vocation, relationships, play, and everything else in life?

Finally, force. . . yes force. . . your kids to rest. Research points to the many ways in which over-scheduling and the pressures of life are leading kids into a constant state of anxiety and stress. Perhaps a long-overdue counter-cultural approach that's obedient to the Lord's commands is what's needed. God made us for a rhythm of work and rest. Our bodies, minds, and spirits need to shut down regularly. Your kids need nine hours of uninterrupted sleep each and every night. We need a weekly Sabbath rest. And family vacations and time off are needed for rest and replenishment.

As the school year begins, why not seize it as a fresh start for your parenting priorities and practices?

WALT MUELLER
CPYU President



FROM THE NEWS

Brazilian Bum Bum Cream

A few years ago, we began to take notice of all the ads for Botox that were running on television.

Botox promised to remedy our dissatisfaction with the wrinkles and creases we were increasingly seeing as we looked in the mirror. Stopping the aging process has become a cultural obsession, which reveals the deeper theological reality that none of us like the march we're on through aging and to death as a result of human sin. A recent article in *The New York Times* reports that our teenagers are now engaged with a viral trend related to an anti-aging and expensive skin-smoothing product known as Brazilian Bum Bum Cream. Not only should we be concerned that our kids are now working to stop the effects of aging, but also about spending their money wisely. You see, an eight ounce jar of Brazilian Bum Bum Cream sells for \$48. Parents, let's teach our kids to find their identity in Christ, not appearance, and teach them to spend wisely.



TRENDS:



Sadfishing

Many of the new words that have entered into our English vocabulary in recent years are words that have come into existence thanks to the advent and growth of social media and technology. One of those words that has been sparked by a new trend, is sadfishing. Sadfishing is a growing trend among teenagers that offers insights into some of the pressures and mental health issues facing our kids. Sadfishing is a term referring to social media users who exaggerate their emotional state through their online postings with the goal of attracting the attention of others and generating their sympathy. Typically this is done through sad photos and quotes. We need to pay attention to the sadfishing efforts of the kids we know, as going online might be an effort to get somebody to listen, when nobody else is listening to them. In addition, the cry for attention reveals deep relational needs. Parents, build your relationships with your kids, so that they come first to you.



LATEST RESEARCH:

Family Time, Neighborhoods, and Teen Sex

Parents, there is some interesting news about teenagers and sex coming out of the University of California, San Francisco. Researchers asked 4,000 adolescents from 751 neighborhoods and 115 schools in Alabama, Texas, and California questions about the quality of their relationships in their homes and in their neighborhoods. Questions focused on how much time families and neighbors spend with one another. The research found that kids whose parents restricted their dating were 55% less likely to have sex by tenth grade. Other factors contributing to the decision to not have sex by tenth grade include spending less time at home alone, coming from a cohesive family, and living in a close-knit neighborhood. We shouldn't be surprised that valuing and building up our families and relationships with our kids would have this result. God desires us to nurture our children in the faith, raising them in a Christian home.

QUICKSTATS

A recent comparative analysis of national survey results found that one in four U.S. adolescents in grades 9 through 12 reported their sexual identity as non-heterosexual.

(Northwestern Medicine, published in JAMA Pediatrics)

Nearly half of today's 13 to 17 year-olds say they have a parent who is at least sometimes distracted by their phone when they're trying to talk to them.

(Pew Research Center)

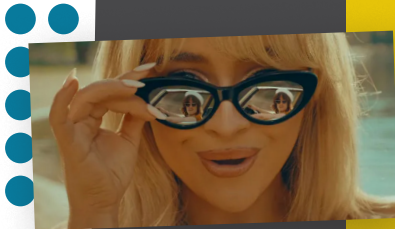
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SONGS OF THE SUMMER

1. "Von Dutch" by Charli XCX
2. "Not Like Us" by Kendrick Lamar
3. "Espresso" by Sabrina Carpenter
4. "Good Luck, Babe!" by Chappell Roan
5. "I Had Some Help" by Post Malone feat. Morgan Wallen
6. "A Bar Song (Tipsy)" by Shaboozey
7. "Fisherrr (Remix)" by Cash Cobain feat. Ice Spice and Bay Swag
8. "Gata Only" by FloyyMenor and Chris MJ
9. "TGIF" by GloRilla
10. "Please Please Please" by Sabrina Carpenter
11. "Hot to Go!" by Chappell Roan
12. "Perfume" by The Dare
13. "Tough" by Lana Del Rey and Quavo
14. "Joyride" by Kesha
15. "She's Leaving You" by MJ Lenderman
16. "Birds of a Feather" by Billie Eilish
17. "Sandpaper" by Zach Bryan feat. Bruce Springsteen

As chosen by
Rolling Stone staff
(in no particular order)
Source:
RollingStone.com



PARENTS AS CROSS-CULTURAL MISSIONARIES

by WALT MUELLER

When Christian missionaries go through training, they spend lots of time learning their message. Missionary training is centered on learning the Gospel so that it might be shared correctly. But the message is not the only thing they learn. They also go through lots of learning about the culture of those to whom they are being sent, along with how to best communicate in ways that can be heard and understood in that context.

Parents, did you know that you are a cross-cultural missionary? As you raise your children in the Lord, your need to know their cultural context.

Culture-watcher Aaron Renn provides some helpful information on our current parenting context. He tells us that since 2014, we are now parenting in a world that has come to have a negative view of Christianity. We need to understand that this may create obstacles in sharing our faith with our kids, especially if they have adopted this view. Be sensitive to this reality, but faithfully speak and live out your Christian faith.

FROM THE WORD



As your kids head back to another year of school, you are no doubt concerned that they will be listening to their teachers and studying hard so that they might gain knowledge. But while book knowledge is necessary, important, and helpful, it is not the most important type of knowledge we should hope our kids learn.

Because they've been made *by* and *for* God, our ultimate desire over all other desires should be to see them seek and embrace a knowledge that is rooted in their fear of the Lord. In Proverbs 1:7 we read that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." This *fear* is not a terror, but rather a state of being so in awe of God's majesty and power that you desire nothing more than to honor Him in every nook and cranny of your life. As Tim Keller says, the resulting *wisdom* leads us to know how to make "the right choice even

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Proverbs 1:7

when there are no clear moral laws telling you explicitly what to do." To not embrace this kind of wisdom is to be, simply stated, foolish.

This school year, make it a priority to endlessly lead your kids into the Scriptures so that they might see God for who He is, stand in awe of Him, and then grow in the wisdom and instruction of the Lord.



PODCAST



The Word in Youth Ministry

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

BE SURE TO CHECK OUT EPISODE 71:

"BATTLING HAPPATHY IN OUR YOUTH GROUPS"
WITH DOUG FRANKLIN

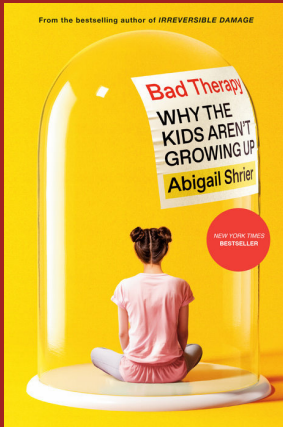


LISTEN AT WWW.CPYU.ORG/TWIYM

“Easily the most important book of the year.”

— GREG LUKIANOFF,
co-author of *The Coddling of the American Mind*

HELPFUL RESOURCES



BOOK

In virtually every way that can be measured, Gen Z’s mental health is worse than that of previous generations. Youth suicide rates are climbing, antidepressant prescriptions for children are common, and the proliferation of mental health diagnoses has not helped the staggering number of kids who are lonely, lost, sad and fearful of growing up. What’s gone wrong with America’s youth?

In *Bad Therapy: Why The Kids Aren’t Growing Up*, bestselling investigative journalist Abigail Shrier argues that the problem isn’t the kids—it’s the mental health experts. Drawing on hundreds of interviews with child psychologists, parents, teachers, and young people, Shrier explores the ways the mental health industry has transformed the way we teach, treat, discipline, and even talk to our kids. She reveals that most of the therapeutic approaches have serious side effects and few proven benefits. Among her unsettling findings:

- Talk therapy can induce rumination, trapping children in cycles of anxiety and depression
- Social Emotional Learning handicaps our most vulnerable children, in both public schools and private
- “Gentle parenting” can encourage emotional turbulence – even violence – in children as they lash out, desperate for an adult in charge

Mental health care can be lifesaving when properly applied to children with severe needs, but for the typical child, the cure can be worse than the disease. *Bad Therapy* is a must-read for anyone questioning why our efforts to bolster America’s kids have backfired—and what it will take for parents to lead a turnaround.