



PARENTING IN THE STORMS

“Mayday! Mayday! Mayday!” I’ve never heard a parent say it that way, but I could have. I’ve heard countless cries for help verbalized with different verbiage. For many parents, “We need help. . . and we need it now!” indicates that an unexpected crisis is unfolding with a beloved child whose choices and circumstances require focused attention in order to respond in ways that will lead to hope and healing. Because we live in a broken and sinful world, the winds and waves of parenting kids will rise when the storm and stress of childhood and adolescence leaves us reeling and looking for help. I know. I’ve been there with others, and I’ve been there myself.

It’s important to anchor ourselves in God’s Word so that we might understand our parenting difficulties with perspectives that will help us weather these storms. There are a variety of truths... I call them my “This I know’s”... which have served me as a steadying force when difficulties come. I believe

that if you remind yourself of these things on a regular basis, they’ll radically transform your parenting life and the way you approach the valuable years you spend with your kids. Here are five of these truths:

Your teenager is a gift from God. We can’t buy into the widespread cynicism and negativity regarding teenagers and their years of adolescence. The psalmist writes, “Don’t you see that children are God’s best gift? The fruit of the womb is his generous legacy? Like a warrior’s fistful of arrows are the kids of a vigorous youth. Oh how blessed are you parents, with your quivers full of children!” (Psalm 127:3-5, MSG). Our children are not liabilities; they’re rewards from God given to us as a sign of God’s favor. God highly values these young divine image-bearers, and so must we. Our kids remain gifts, even when the going gets difficult.

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YOUTH
CULTURE

HOT
QUOTE

Demi Moore, looking back on her career and the roles she chose, *Elle.com*, November 14, 2024.

“There is a lot of torment I put myself through when I was younger. The perfect example is when I was told to lose weight multiple times. The producer pulled me aside. It was very embarrassing and humiliating. But that’s just one thing. How I internalized it and how it moved me to a place of such torture and harshness against myself, of real extreme behaviors, and that I placed almost all the value of who I was on my body being a certain way—that’s on me.”



"[THE TEENAGE] YEARS ARE OFTEN CATAclysmic YEARS OF CONFLICT, STRUGGLE, AND GRIEF. THEY ARE YEARS OF NEW TEMPTATIONS, TRIALS, AND TESTING. YET, THESE VERY STRUGGLES, CONFLICTS, TRIALS AND TESTS ARE WHAT PRODUCE SUCH WONDERFUL PARENTING OPPORTUNITIES."



Like everything else in life, parenting isn't easy. If you're struggling as a parent, don't assume you're alone. You're not. Parenting isn't easy for anybody! Paul Tripp reminds us that for all of us parenting kids in today's world these "years are often cataclysmic years of conflict, struggle, and grief. They are years of new temptations, trials, and testing. Yet, these very struggles, conflicts, trials and tests are what produce such wonderful parenting opportunities."¹

Perfection? There's no such thing. As a youth culture analyst, there's one question I get asked more often than any other: "What's the greatest problem facing kids today?" My one-word answer is very simple: Sin. It's the same greatest problem facing people of all times and in all places. It's the same greatest problem I face in my own life. Each of us has "exchanged the truth of God for a lie" and we worship and serve "created things rather than the Creator" (Romans 1:25). All of us, including our kids, are sinners desperately in need of a Savior.

Helpless is a good place to be. The Scriptures speak from beginning to end about the benefits of suffering, telling us that facing difficult times and circumstances leads to spiritual growth, a

deeper understanding of and dependency on God, and even salvation. James tells us, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, when you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance" which leads to maturity (James 1:2-4). Together with our kids, we can experience the joy of going deeper with God and depending on him during the challenges of parenting.

Your child longs for God. It might not seem that way when you are weathering the storms, but behind all the wandering and even in the midst of rebellion, there is this universal hole-in-the-soul that Blaise Pascal described as a God-shaped vacuum. Only God can fill that hole. John Stott reminds us that even when our kids are running from God, they know they "have no other resting-place, no other home."²

Parents, in the midst of our parenting challenges and difficulties, we can and must cry out to God for help, perspective, knowledge, and wisdom. And as we trust Him to be doing His work in our children's lives, we must approach our task of parenting not as a punishment, problem, or cross to bear, but as an opportunity to depend on God while teaching our kids to do the same!

WALT MUELLER
CPYU President



¹Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens, 19-20.

²The Contemporary Christian: Applying God's Word to Today's World, 39.

FROM THE NEWS

ONLINE GORE

The dictionary defines the word "gore" as blood that has been shed, especially as a result of violence.

Keep that definition in mind as you think about the fact that the Attorney General of South Carolina, Alan Wilson, recently issued a warning to parents regarding online groups which are issuing invitations to our children and teens to create and share gorey videos online. One such group is known as the 764 organization, which is a decentralized online network of individuals who approach vulnerable kids, encouraging them to record acts of self-harm, cruelty to animals, child sexual abuse, bestiality, and even suicide. The Attorney General says that these groups encourage and even threaten kids through online video games and chatrooms to become the victims themselves, and to victimize others. Parents, this gore trend offers one more reason to keep your kids safe by limiting their screen and online time. God calls us to protect our kids from harm, and to provide for their well-being.



TRENDS:



Modern Weddings

In today's world, generally speaking, the exorbitant amount of time and money spent on wedding preparations are not funneled into getting a couple ready for everything that comes after the ceremony and reception, but rather on things that are what might be called "showy", like rings, dresses, flowers, food, photos, bands, etc. The trend seems to be to spend everything on the day, rather than the lifetime that follows. This cultural trend is one that needs to be reversed. In a social media saturated world where we see ourselves as performers and function as such, even marriages have paid a steep price. And, if this is what our kids grow up believing a marriage really is, then we've done them a huge dis-service as we've nurtured them into either a rude awakening for which they are not prepared, or even marital failure. Parents, youth workers, and pastors, we need to do better. Teach your children about God's design for marriage, conflict-resolution, and life-time commitment.



LATEST RESEARCH:

Marriage or Financial Success?

The Genesis creation narrative tells us that after creating humankind both male and female in His own image, God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it." This creation mandate reveals God's intentions

for His image-bearers. New research conducted by the Pew Research Center indicates that for today's teenagers ages 13-17, getting married and having kids is not a top priority. In fact, 86% of the respondents say that it's extremely or very important for them to have a job or career they enjoy and which brings financial

success when they reach adulthood. Only 36% said that they cared about getting married, and just 30% say it's important to have children. With the cultural tide moving in this direction, perhaps we need to do a better job of teaching about God's heart and design for the family, teaching them that having and raising children is a high privilege and high calling!

QUICKSTATS

Among kids in the UK ages 5-7, 50% are watching livestreams on apps or websites, 41% are gaming online, and 38% are using social media apps.

(Ofcom)

It is estimated that teens will gain around 1 million jobs across May, June, and July in 2025. This is well off the forecast of 1.3 million from 2024 and the actual 1.1 million that were eventually added. If accurate, this would be the lowest mark since 2010.

(Challenger, Gray & Christmas)

||| TOP |||

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TEENS' MOST RECOMMENDED BRANDS IN NORTH AMERICA

1. Doritos
2. Nike
3. YouTube
4. Oreo
5. Amazon
6. TikTok
7. PINK
8. iPhone
9. Coca-Cola
10. The Home Depot

2024

Source:

YPulse Youth Brand Tracker and the Recommended Brands report



PURSUE YOUR KIDS' INTERESTS

by WALT MUELLER

Parents, I'd like to encourage you to take an active interest in those things that interest your children and teens. This is an easy one if you and your teen share the same interests. But what happens if you're a left-brained parent raising a right-brained kid?

We once heard a parent complain that his son didn't share his love for canoeing. Consequently, he didn't think there'd ever be anything he could do with his son. Sadly, it never crossed the frustrated father's mind that he could enter into his son's world and life by pursuing one of his son's interests.

Maybe we should all think about putting some of our own interests aside for a few years, so that we have more time to pursue the interests of our kids with our kids. Taking an interest in their interests not only allows us to spend much-needed time with our kids, but opens up opportunities to communicate, builds our relationship, and lets us discover and celebrate their gifts and abilities.

Take an interest in their interests!

FROM THE WORD

WHILE

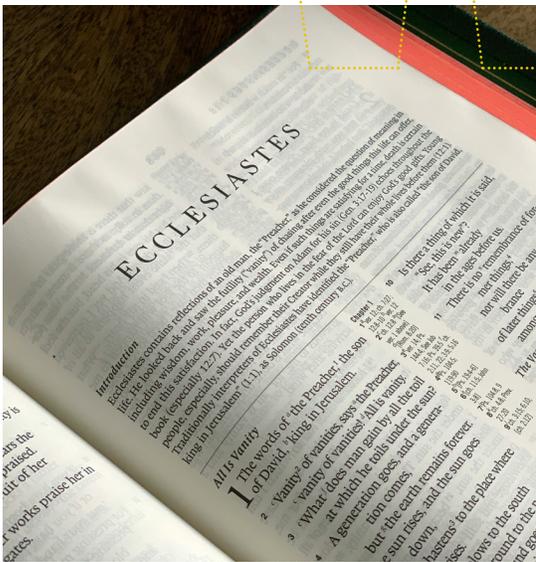
While it might not always seem to be the case, everyone who's ever walked the face of the earth has been made by God for a relationship with God. Consequently, the reality is that everyone has eternity written on their hearts (Ecclesiastes 3:11). Because our rebellion and sin have severed our relationship with God, there remains a deep yearning inside each human being to have that relationship restored. Blaise Pascal described this universal hole in the soul as a God-shaped vacuum. Only God can fill it, even though we spend our lives in futility trying to fill it in other ways and with other things.

While at times it may not seem like it, your child is no different than anyone else. His great need – whether or not he knows what to call it – is to have this God-shaped emptiness filled by God. If you listen and look closely, you'll see and hear that their music, films, books, social media, and very life are full of cries for spiritual wholeness.

“He has put eternity into man's heart.”

Ecclesiastes 3:11

Theologian Alistair McGrath reminds us that for all of us, “one of the few certainties of life is that nothing in this world satisfies our longing for something that is ultimately beyond this world.” (*The Unknown God: Searching for Spiritual Fulfillment*, 120.) Don't be timid. Don't hold back assuming they have no interest in God. They were created for a relationship with Him which is, ultimately, what they long for more than anything else.



PODCAST



Youth Culture Today with Walt Mueller is a one-minute daily radio show and podcast from CPYU.

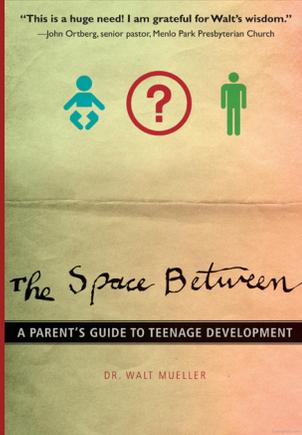
A NEW SHOW IS POSTED EVERY WEEKDAY!



LISTEN AT WWW.CPYU.ORG/YOUTHCULTURETODAY



HELPFUL RESOURCES



BOOK

The teenage years are a unique life stage—one that fills even the calmest parents with confusion and dread as they begin to feel like helpless bystanders to the rapidly changing lives of their teens.

If you're struggling as a parent, you're not alone. Raising children is difficult work, and it gets more difficult as they reach adolescence. But you don't need to feel alone or paralyzed by these feelings.

With deep encouragement and practical advice born from long study and first-hand experience, Walt Mueller has written a guide for parents with children who are going through the tumultuous years of adolescence.

The Space Between: A Parent's Guide to Teenage Development will walk you through how your teen is developing physically, socially, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually as you learn:

- How you can make the adolescent period smoother for your teen.
- How you can begin to break through the walls of confusion, fear, frustration, and misunderstanding.
- How you can be a positive and proactive bridgebuilder into the life and world of your teenager.

Finally, you'll discover how you can approach the task of parenting teenagers as an opportunity to depend on God while teaching your impressionable teen to do the same.

Order copies at
cpyu.org/shop or
scan the QR code.

