

CPYU PARENT PAGE

2015

HELPING PARENTS
UNDERSTAND TEENAGERS
AND THEIR WORLD



RAISING KIDS WHO DON'T FIT IN

When we weren't fishing, swimming, or visiting tourist attractions during our annual Florida vacation, my brothers and I would venture out on a "lizard safari." Although we knew the little chameleons were hiding in every bush and tree, we had a hard time spotting them. But it wasn't long before we learned that when chameleons were hiding on the green leaves of a palmetto plant, we were looking for a green chameleon. If they sat on the trunk of a palm tree, they would turn brown and be almost invisible. At other times they would turn almost gray, camouflage themselves while sunning on the stucco walls of the house. A chameleon will change color to blend in with its environment.

Over the years, I've learned that as a sinner in need of God's grace, I am constantly engaged in a battle with that ever-present default setting to blend in like a chameleon to my environment. As parents, we must be mindful of training our kids to see and address this battle now during the growing-up-years where they're especially susceptible to changing colors, and throughout the rest of their lives.

In his letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul recognizes and addresses this nagging tendency in our lives with a call to *holy living*, which is a kind of living that is bound to make us stick out from those who follow what he elsewhere calls "*the course of this world*" (Ephesians 2:2). Paul says that in view of and in response to God's mercy and grace in saving us through faith in Jesus Christ, we should gratefully "*present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship*" (Romans 12:1). How do we do that? I love the way J.B. Phillips paraphrases the answer Paul gives us in Romans 12:2. "*Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its mold, but let God remold your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves toward the goal of spiritual maturity.*" We offer up our lives, allegiance, and conformity to His will as a big "thank you!" for the free gift of our salvation. Rather than taking "our color" from our surroundings through a willful outward act of conformity, we are to seek to yield our will to God's will as the Holy Spirit does His work of inward *transformation* in

CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE →

YOUTH CULTURE

HOT QUOTE

Charles Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening Daily Devotional*.

"The moment we glorify ourselves, since there is room for only one glory in the universe, we set ourselves up as rivals to the Most High."



“WE MUST RECOGNIZE AND KNOW THE LIES OF THE WORLD THAT CALL FOR THEIR CONFORMITY IN ORDER TO BRING THE TRANSFORMATIVE LIGHT OF THE WORD TO EXPOSE ON THOSE LIES.”



our lives. In essence, we should be praying, becoming, moving, and parenting away from *worldly* belief and behavior shaped by the environment, to “*Word-ly*” belief and behavior shaped by God’s will and way as revealed in the Bible.

Here are five practices that will help you parent your kids away from the mold of the world.

First, know the Word. It all begins with you. Your primary and overarching priority through your life is to pursue depth in both your relationship with the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, and your knowledge of God’s written revelation of Himself in the Bible. Study it. Learn it. Then study and learn it some more. Never stop. Embrace God’s Word like the Psalmist, seeing it as the lamp to your feet and the light to your path (Psalm 119:105).

Second, know the world. Theologian John Stott calls this “dual listening.” He says that we “stand between the Word and the world with consequent obligation to listen to both. We listen to the Word in order to discover ever more of the riches of Christ. And we listen to the world in order to discover which of Christ’s riches are needed most and how to present them in their best light.” We must recognize and know the lies of the world that call for their conformity in order to bring the transformative light of the Word to expose on those lies.

Third, teach them the Word. Echoing the instructions to teach God’s Word to our children spoken by Moses in Deuteronomy

6:4-9, the Apostle Paul reminds us of the need to bring up our children “in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). Read and teach the Bible at home. Attend worship together to sit under the preaching of God’s Word. They can handle it! Involve them in a church youth group so they might learn God’s Word in the midst of their peers.

Fourth, supplement your lips with your life. Proverbs 20:7 tells us that “The righteous who walks in his integrity – blessed are his children after him!” Elisabeth Elliot tells us that “the example of parents, for good or ill, is an influence far more profound than can be measured.”

Finally, trust God’s Spirit. We cannot drag our kids screaming and kicking into God’s Kingdom. Neither do we want to strong-arm them into nothing more than behavioral conformity. Rather, we trust God’s Spirit to do His work in their lives, transforming their hearts. As Paul Tripp tells us, “The goal of parenting is not control of behavior, but rather heart and life change.”

The cultural pressure for our children to live like chameleons will always be present, but we are equipped with the ultimate guide to counter it. Through intentional teaching, authentic living, and steadfast prayer, we can protect our kids from being squeezed into society’s mold. Let us then commit to parenting away from worldly conformity, trusting God to bring about true, lasting heart change in our kids!



WALT MUELLER
CPYU President

FROM THE NEWS

RAISING CHILDREN WHO LOVE THE CHURCH

In a recent article in *ByFaith* magazine, author Katie Polski shares three things that each of us needs to keep in mind as we seek to raise our children to love the Church.

First, Katie tells us that it all begins at home. She writes, “If we want our families to love what Jesus loves, our children need more than occasional or vague spiritual intentions.” Because they learn from what they see in us, our kids need parents who delight in being a part of the gathered people of God. Second, Katie tells us that raising Church-loving kids will happen when we are regularly and consistently involved in the life of our church. She reminds us that while it is important to start early when they are young, it’s never too late for you to commit to your church. And third, Katie tells us we need to be talking about faith all week, looking for those teachable moments to show our kids how the Christian faith speaks to all of life. Parents, you are the one primarily responsible for the spiritual nurture of your kids.



TRENDS:



Resurgence of iPods

Recently, there's been a trend of online videos of people running a large sieve through the sand at a beach, to find coins, jewelry, and other treasures. One of these videos shows a young man pulling his sieve up out of the sand, finding a red iPod that had been lost for who knows how long. Perhaps sometime during or after 2001, you had purchased and were using your own iPod, which at the time was a cutting edge piece of technology. Since 25 years have passed and technology has advanced, you might think that the beachcomber would have thrown away that find. But he didn't. Now, younger generations are flocking to eBay and other sites to purchase the device which, as of 2022, had been discontinued. Why is this happening? Not only is there a surge of nostalgia for the iPod in today's youth culture, but users are saying that by listening to music on an iPod and not a phone, there are no notification distractions. Could it be that our kids are longing for the relative quiet we once knew?



LATEST RESEARCH:

Nudification Tools

If you pay any attention at all to the changes taking place in youth culture, you will be sure to encounter words and terms occasioned by the new pressures, problems, challenges, and opportunities facing our kids as they grow up in today's world. One of those terms that should cause us to wake up and take notice is this: nudification tools. These tools take the form

of artificial intelligence-powered apps that allow users to upload a picture of a person, then hit a button to create sexualized images, typically nude photos. A new study from George Mason University has found that the use of these nudification tools, which have historically been used by more boys than girls, are now being used by girls at the same rate as teenage

boys. Researchers found that roughly one in six teen girls and boys used nudification tools frequently to see how they looked. Nudification is becoming normalized for our kids. Parents, warn your kids about the moral, relational, and spiritual issues related to this troubling trend.

QUICKSTATS

College students are switching majors due to AI concerns, with roughly 70% viewing the technology as a threat to their job prospects. 48% of Gen Z workers say the risks of AI in the workforce outweigh the possible benefits.

(Institute of Politics/Gallup)

2.2% of U.S. adolescents aged 12 to 17 have used inhalants within the past year. Inhalants are a broad class of drugs that are invisible, volatile substances typically found in household or industrial products such as glue, paint thinners, aerosol sprays, and nitrous oxide.

(Preventive Medicine)

III TOP III

10

MOST POPULAR SHOWS

Global
All Time

Source:

Netflix

* Rankings based
on total views in the
first 91 days of release

1. Wednesday: Season 1
2. Adolescence: Limited Series
3. Stranger Things 4
4. Stranger Things 5
5. Wednesday:
Season 2
6. DAHMER: Monster:
The Jeffrey Dahmer Story
7. Bridgerton: Season 1
8. The Queen's Gambit: Limited
Series
9. Bridgerton: Season 3
10. HIS & HERS: Limited Series



WEDDINGS AND COMMITMENT

by WALT MUELLER

Since we're currently in the midst of wedding season, there's a good chance you've been invited and will attend the wedding of a young couple you know. As Christians living in a world where marriage is no longer held up as a sacred thing, it's always good, beautiful, and refreshing to see a couple covenant together before God in marriage.

As with most wedding receptions these days, you might see the couple choreograph and carefully perform an elaborate dance at the start of the reception. I don't know about you, but it's hard to not rejoice at the looks on their faces as they focus their eyes on each other, smiling with joy in anticipation of their life together. Of course, this is only the first day of the life they anticipate living together. But like all newly married couples, they have no idea what they are dancing into.

Parents, we need to instruct our children in the fact that marital love is a commitment to - with God's help - stick together through the good and the bad of life.

FROM THE WORD

The Old Testament's book of Proverbs is rich in wisdom. In fact, that's why it was written. In the first chapter of Proverbs we learn that the book was written to "give prudence to the simple" and "knowledge and discretion to the young" (1:4). Over and over the writer of Proverbs refers to "my son," an indication that the book is especially helpful for us as parents as we work and pray to instill wisdom for life into the hearts and minds of our children and teens. If you are a parent who endeavors to take every opportunity to instruct your kids in God's will and way for their lives (see Deuteronomy 6:1-9), you should be passing on the wisdom of Proverbs.

"He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm."

Proverbs 13:20



In Proverbs 13:20 we find some of the Bible's best and most direct advice on the kinds of company we should keep. In Eugene Peterson's *The Message*, this verse is rendered this way: "Become wise by walking with the wise; hang out with fools and watch your life fall to pieces." Yes, the company that we keep does matter. Actor Will Smith captured a practical reality of the consequences of choosing friends when he said this: "Look at your five closest friends. Those five friends are who you are."

As you look for ways to teach your kids about the importance of choosing good friends, take some time to ponder the company you keep. As we endeavor to grow in our likeness to Christ, we should be choosing and moving in a close circle of friends who look like Him. . . and who will make us wise!

PODCAST



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

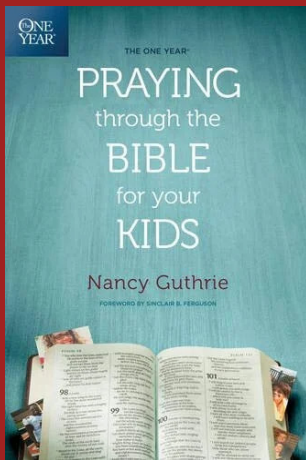
A NEW SHOW IS POSTED EVERY WEEKDAY!



LISTEN AT WWW.CPYU.ORG/YOUTHCULTURETODAY



HELPFUL RESOURCES



BOOK

As parents we strategize and agonize. We wish for secret formulas and sure-fire methods. But somewhere along the way we discover that what our kids need most is for God to do in their lives what only He can do.

Help yourself to a daily dose of parenting perspective, a daily infusion of hope, and a daily call to trust in *The One Year Praying Through the Bible for Your Kids*.

Join trusted author Nancy Guthrie in discovering how the scriptures speak into the triumphs and turbulence of parenting as well as provide fresh words for our prayers. Following *The One Year Bible* reading plan, Nancy mines each daily reading for insight into what it means to receive God's grace as you parent as well as extend that grace to your kids. Day by day you'll find yourself worrying less and praying more as your dreams and desires for your kids are shaped more by the scriptures than the culture around you. Let go of fear and expect God to work as you pray through the Bible for your kids.