

It's All About Me, Me, Me.

YOUTH CULTURE HOT QUOTE

“Every minute we spend thinking about how thin and gorgeous and perfect we aren't, is a moment that we aren't thinking about growing our business or our education, or our family or the fun in our lives... I'm hearing about eight-year-olds and nine-year-olds worried about their bodies and their thighs, and their thigh gaps. It's just out of control.”

Actress Jameela Jamil, who started an Instagram campaign to help fight the epidemic of low self-esteem among women and girls, BBC.com, March 25, 2018



WALT MUELLER, CPYU President



Boxer Muhammad Ali used to dance around the ring proclaiming to anyone within earshot, “I am the greatest!” It was funny because Ali had become a caricature of himself who was at heart an entertainer. But Ali’s show has morphed into reality for a generation of children and teens who are encouraged to dance through life loving and serving the idol of self.

Our kids are growing up in a culture of narcissism. Narcissus is the youthful Greek mythological character who couldn’t take his eyes off his own reflection. Self-absorbed, his world revolved around nobody or nothing but himself. In the end, his self-love led to his death. Researchers at San Diego State University who have tracked narcissism have gone so far as to label this generation of children and teens the most narcissistic generation ever. If you don’t believe it just spend some time with pop culture, listening and watching as it promotes the self-absorbed lifestyle of me, myself, and I entitlement. It’s “all about me” because. . . after all. . . “I am the greatest!”

As parents, we must desire to see our kids live out and communicate the selfless Kingdom of God instead of the kingdom of self. Here are some initial steps we can and must take to counteract narcissism’s powerful and pervasive influence.

First, understand the importance of reminding them that they have been made to worship, serve, and glorify God. . . not themselves. Some of the most timely and

foundational words in Rick Warren’s best-selling *Purpose Driven Life* are the first four words of the book: “It’s not about you.” Jesus turns narcissism on its head when he tells his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23). Take every opportunity to point out the centrality of God, not self, in all of life.

Second, don’t give them too much. Our kids are raised in a culture that tells them “it’s all about you.” The result is a lifestyle of selfish indulgence marked by greed and entitlement. As people charged with the task of leading them to spiritual maturity, our goal should be to see their eyes and energies focus less and less on self, and more and more on God. Don’t give them an unhealthy overabundance of experiences or things.

Finally, pray for a healthy measure of crisis to enter the lives of your kids. Narcissism plays and advances well in a culture that feeds the beast of self-absorption from a deep well of luxury and wealth. Sometimes it’s not until the well runs dry through poverty, want, or crisis that our kids understand their thirst for what it really is – a longing not after self, but after God. As John Stott reminds us about the prodigal son, “he had to ‘come to himself’ (acknowledge his self-centeredness) before he could ‘come to his father.’” While we hate to see our kids hurt, sometimes their idolatrous obsession with self must be broken down before they can be built back up in Christ. ★

Most Watched Streaming Video Game Content on Twitch

Week of March 20 -
March 26, 2019
Source:
esportsobserver.com



1. **League of Legends**
2. **Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice**
3. **Grand Theft Auto V**
4. **Fortnite**
5. **Just Chatting**
6. **Dota 2**
7. **Apex Legends**
8. **Counter-Strike: Global Offensive**
9. **Overwatch**
10. **PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds**



QUICK STATS

New teenage drivers are 8 times more likely to crash or have a close call in the first 3 months after getting their license than they were during the last 3 months of driving on their learner's permit.

(Journal of Adolescent Health)

Just over 10% of children ages 11 and under in the U.S. have their own smartphone.

(eMarketer)

FROM THE NEWS:

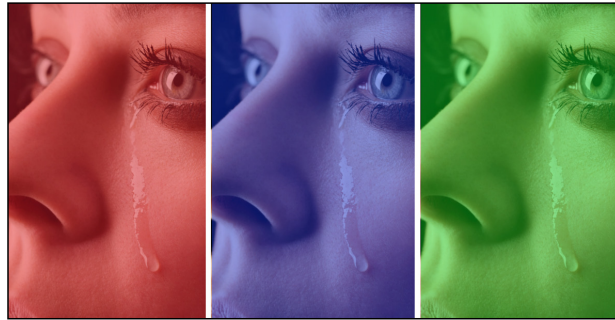
PARENTAL AWARENESS OF KIDS AND SELF-HARM

“What were you thinking?!?” Perhaps you can remember your parents asking you that question on several occasions after your teenaged self had engaged in some kind of ridiculous activity or behavior. In today's world, we need to ask the same question with a more compassionate bent as our kids navigate the pressure and stress-filled landscape of adolescence in today's youth culture. The American Academy of Pediatrics is reporting that there is a huge and growing gap in awareness between parents and their children who have thoughts of self-harm. About half of parents whose children have suicidal thoughts are unaware that their children are having these thoughts, and seventy-five percent are unaware of the fact that their children are having recurrent thoughts of death. Parents, our kids need us to be aware of what's going on in their lives. Foster a culture of openness built on relationship. Don't be afraid to ask questions. And always point your kids to the One who calls us to cast our cares and burdens on Him.

TRENDS: EMOTIONAL RISK-TAKING

Teenagers are developmentally at a point where it's not unusual for them to engage in risky behaviors. Our parents knew this and would say things like don't drive fast and don't play with fire. In recent years, fewer and fewer of eighth and tenth grade kids say they get a real kick out of doing things that are a little dangerous. In regards to things like physical dangers, this is good news and a positive trend.

But this trend away from risk-taking goes beyond physical risks to include emotional, social, and intellectual risks. Educators are saying that kids are more cautious than ever, with the desire to avoid danger extending to a concern about emotional safety. This has created a situation where students feel wounded and emotionally injured even when they hear the dangerous and costly truths of the Gospel. Parents, don't shield your kids from the difficult discussions that have to be had. To grow in their faith, they must hear the whole Gospel, and allow it to confront them in their comfort.



LATEST RESEARCH: KIDS AND SPIRITUALITY

Anthony James, a graduate student at the University of Missouri, has spent time listening to kids who define themselves as spiritual. He wanted to find out what they thought it meant to be spiritual. He categorized the scattered variety of answers he heard into seven categories. According to the kids, to be spiritual is 1) to have a purpose – 2) to feel a connection with people, nature, and a higher power – 3) to have a foundation of well-being – 4) to have convictions – 5) to have self-confidence – 6) to have a motivation to do right – and 7) a category James could only summarize as “unable to define”, since many kids say they're spiritual, but have no idea how to articulate what that means. Our kids do recognize that they are spiritual beings. This serves to remind us that we must talk about spiritual things with our kids. Specifically, we must point them to an understanding of what it means to be a child of the one, true God.

COLLEGE TRANSITION INITIATIVE

a resource of CPYU



www.CollegeTransitionInitiative.com

The Purpose of Work

by Walt Mueller



What will the kids you know and love see as the end or purpose of work? Why will they choose to pursue the job and career path they choose to pursue? Will their goals be economic in ways that make the old Loverboy song “Working For the Weekend” their personal anthem? Or will they push back on the empty promises and dead-end of what's known as “The American Dream?”

If we truly believe that the Gospel speaks to all of life and that Christian nurture leads to the integration of faith into our work, then we need to be pointing our kids to something better than what the culture is currently giving them. In a recent edition of *First Things* magazine, professor Max Torres writes about the Christian view of work: “The investment of the person into productive products is of transcendent, transformative importance, not just for the material progress of society, but most of all for the full realization of human potential.”

We've been made to work to God's glory.

New Podcast

Youth Culture Matters is a long-format podcast from CPYU co-hosted by Walt Mueller and Jason Soucinek.



Listen at www.cpyu.org/podcast.

Be sure to check out Episode 80 titled "Millennials, Evangelism and Faith Formation" with David Kinnaman from The Barna Group

FROM THE WORD

When you discover your kids engaged in sinful or immoral behavior, how do you respond? William P. Smith reminds us that like when our first parents (Adam and Eve) fell into sin (Genesis 3:6) and rebelled against God, "they attempted to hide." Doesn't that sound a bit like our kids?

Smith says that the way we respond to our children's sin can set the table either for more deception, or for repentance and restoration. He writes, "We provide powerful incentives for others to run and hide rather than confess what they have done wrong." These incentives include pouring out our anger, listing all the ways they have hurt us, ridicule, humiliation, and shame.

"BUT THE LORD GOD CALLED TO THE MAN AND SAID TO HIM, 'WHERE ARE YOU?'"
GENESIS 3:9

But the fact that God is different should point us to a more redemptive and helpful approach to responding to our kids when they sin. Smith says, "He doesn't swoop down on Adam and Eve and start demanding, 'What were you thinking?!' He doesn't berate, badger, and interrogate them. Nor does he hold himself aloof, waiting for them to make the first move. Instead, he comes to them."

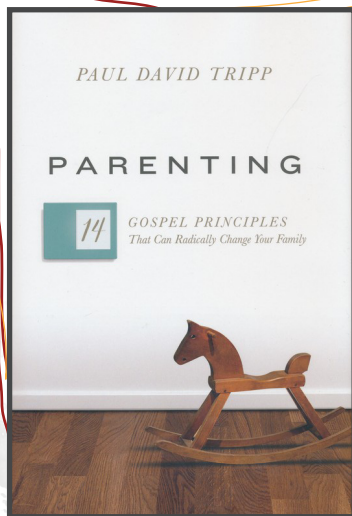
Our kids need us to gently, yet with conviction, approach them to start the process of making things right. Next time your kids fall into sin, lovingly seek them out, and then parent them through their sin into confession and repentance.

HELPFUL RESOURCE ←

In the midst of folding laundry, coordinating carpool schedules, and breaking up fights, many parents get lost. Feeling pressure to do everything "right" and raise up "good" children, it's easy to lose sight of our ultimate purpose as parents in the quest for practical tips and guaranteed formulas.

In the life-giving book, *Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Your Family*, Paul Tripp offers parents much more than a to-do list. Instead, he presents us with a big-picture view of God's plan for us as parents. Outlining fourteen foundational principles centered on the gospel, he shows that we need more than the latest parenting strategy or list of techniques. Rather, we need the rescuing grace of God—grace that has the power to shape how we view everything we do as parents.

Freed from the burden of trying to manufacture life-change in our children's hearts, we can embrace a grand perspective of parenting overflowing with vision, purpose, and joy.



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