

KIDS AND SCREEN TIME

“Papa, are zombies real??” That’s the question my seven-year-old grandson asked me after seeing a TV commercial for a movie about these mythological undead corpses Hollywood and the comic book creators tell us walk the earth. “No Nolan. Zombies are not real.” Or, are they?

New research from OnePoll reports that seven in ten American parents surveyed worried that their children *are*, in fact, turning into “Internet Zombies” as a result of the growing amount of time they are spending online. Two in three parents also believe their child’s overall behavior has changed as a result of spending increased time online.

Just how much time are our kids spending online? According to their most recent *Media Use By Tweens and Teens* survey, the folks at Common Sense Media report that media use has grown faster in these age groups since the start of the pandemic than it has over the four years prior to the pandemic. From 2015 to 2019, media use for tweens (ages 8-12)

grew only 3%, and 11% for teens (ages 13-18). But from 2019 to 2021 alone, media use grew by 17% for our tweens and teens! Think for a minute about just how staggering the statistics are regarding our kids’ average daily entertainment screen use. Our tweens have their eyes on their screens for an average of five hours and 33 minutes a day. For our teenagers, it’s a whopping eight hours and 39 minutes a day. And just to remind you, this is entertainment screen time *only*. It does not include time spent with screens for educational purposes, either in school or at home.

Our kids are growing up as “digital natives” in a world where they will never be without screens and technology. Because Jesus is the Lord of all of life, doesn’t it make sense that we make a continued effort to disciple our kids into using technology in ways that advance the Kingdom of God, that bring glory to God, and which facilitate human flourishing? In other words, the process

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YOUTH
CULTURE

HOT
QUOTE

Jimmy Donaldson, a.k.a. MrBeast, talking about his aspirations as one of YouTube’s most popular creators. *Rolling Stone*, The Creators Issue, April 2022.

“I want to be the biggest YouTube channel ever. Not even for my ego. It just gives me something to strive for, to get out of bed and grind for. But it’s also just vanity.”



“PHONES SHOULD BE PUT AWAY WHEN WE FIND OURSELVES IN SITUATIONS WHERE OTHERS ARE PRESENT SO THAT WE MIGHT FOCUS ON FOSTERING THE GROWTH OF OUR FLESH-AND-BLOOD RELATIONSHIPS.”



of raising our kids should include making an effort to engage them in “digital discipleship.” What does that look like? Here are three suggestions to launch you on that task.

First, don’t put a smartphone in the hands of a child before they are ready. How do we know when they are ready? We will have taken the time to not only warn our kids about technology’s danger areas, but we will have seen evidence of their ability to demonstrate responsibility and trustworthiness in other areas of their lives. I’ve heard smartphones likened to both heroin and loaded guns. The former reminds us that smartphones have great potential to become addictive. The latter reminds us that when placed in the hands of those who are impulsive and irresponsible, there is potential for great danger and harm. While our kids don’t want to hear this, a growing chorus of experts are telling parents that smartphones with full capabilities shouldn’t be given to a child until they are 16, and even then, with caution.

Second, set clear time and place limits. None of us, regardless of age, benefits from spending as much time as we want on our devices. Smartphones will become distracting time-wasters if we aren’t careful. The virtual dimension

that sits behind the glass of our screens will become a bottomless pit into which we will find ourselves falling if we aren’t careful. Every minute spent swiping left, right, up, or down is one less minute spent using our time in constructive and redemptive ways. In addition, phones should be put away when we find ourselves in situations where others are present so that we might focus on fostering the growth of our flesh-and-blood relationships. Frankly, we should be ashamed of ourselves if we are allowing our kids to live up to the latest screen time averages.

Finally, we encourage you to engage in “P.O.S. parenting.” That’s the acronym kids use when they want to let others know that “my parent is looking over my shoulder.” We need to monitor where they are going when they are online, what they are posting online, and what they are learning from their time online.

The apostle Paul says that “whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (I Corinthians 10:31). Parents, if we heed this command, we will avoid raising any zombies in our homes!

WALT MUELLER
CPYU President



FROM THE NEWS

KIDS & CREDIT CARD DEBT

Did you know that overall, Americans owe \$807 billion across almost 506 million credit card accounts?

As parents of children and teens, this reality should serve as a catalyst to discuss wise spending habits with a generation of kids who grow up thinking and spending as if piling up debt is normal. Credit card companies are actively seeking out our kids. Many parents report that their kids receive pre-approved credit card offers in the mail. For the most part, we know that developing good credit is important for living in today’s economy. But if we aren’t taking the time to teach our kids principles of good and Godly stewardship, we might be setting them up for a lifetime of materialistic idolatry and financial difficulties. Be aware of the ways your kids are being led into the dangerous lifestyle of materialism, reminding them they are stewards of God’s money.



TRENDS:



Changing Moral Standards

How should we go about teaching our children right from wrong? Are there timeless moral standards which we are called to know, follow, and teach to our children and teens? As Christians, we know that we are called to teach our children the timeless truths of God's Word. The difficulty of doing so in today's world is that they are receiving a 24/7 education from

the culture that rarely is rooted in the truths of God's Word. Dr. Carl Trueman has captured the reality of what our kids are learning from today's culture in one short sentence. He writes, "In modern America, morality is nothing more than the sum total of the tastes of the moment." Parents, it's important for us to know the tastes of the moment so that we can answer and correct those tastes with the truths of God's Word. And, because those tastes of the moment change from moment to moment, we must continue to be diligent in our quest to lead our children and teens into following Jesus.



LATEST RESEARCH:

Coping without Smartphones

Perhaps just hearing and considering some of the statistics on our smartphone use and dependence will cause us to sit up, take notice, and peel back from our growing dependence on our electronic devices. Knowing these facts should also remind us of the importance to set borders and boundaries for our kids.

Six out of ten adults say that they couldn't cope without their smartphone if they were unable to use it for just one day. 55% of adults believe that running out of battery power is what they call a nightmare scenario. One in eight people claim that a dying smartphone battery actually gives them anxiety. Here's

what's really telling: 25% say that they would stress out losing their wedding ring, 40% losing their car keys, 46% losing their bank card, and 47% losing their smartphone. In today's digital age, we have to wonder, are we becoming more dependent on our technology than we are on God?

QUICKSTATS

The proportion of 15-16 year-old teens who feel alienated has tripled over the last twenty years. Fully 1/3 of our teens say they feel alienated from their parents, which is up from 10% in 2000.

(San Diego State University)

From 2009 to 2021, the share of American high-school students who say they feel "persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness" rose from 26% to 44%.

(CDC)

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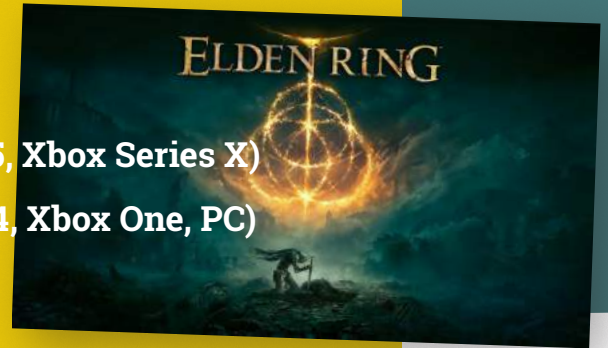
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GAMES TO BUY NEXT

1. Elden Ring
2. Evil Dead: The Game
3. Fortnite
4. Playerunknown's Battlegrounds
5. FIFA 22
6. Starfield
7. Grand Theft Auto V (PS5, Xbox Series X)
8. Grand Theft Auto V (PS4, Xbox One, PC)
9. Saints Row (2022)
10. Destiny 2

Console and PC
Week ended April 25, 2022
Source: Nielsen



PARENTAL PREPARATION FOR DIFFICULT TIMES

by WALT MUELLER

What does it mean to be a Christian parent? One way to parent to the glory of God is to be prepared before any difficult parenting times visit your family. Here are some things to know to get you ready for those difficult times.

Embrace a biblical theology of the sovereignty of God. Yes, God is in control of all things.

Embrace a biblical theology of human depravity. Yes, all of us and all of our kids are fallen beings.

Remember that in a sinful and fallen world there are no guarantees, even if we do everything just right.

Our identity should not be rooted in our children and their performance. Our identity must be found in Christ. Anything else is idolatry.

Our foundation must be God's Word. When the difficult times hit, you will need to constantly remind yourself of the foundational truths of life. Remember that God is parenting and growing us as we parent our teens.

And finally, realize that helpless is a good place to be. It drives us to God and away from ourselves.

FROM THE WORD



s Christian parents, we should earnestly work and pray that our kids would be spared from the spiritually deadly snare of “worldliness.” Oftentimes, our well-intentioned efforts to do so lead us to read John’s words- “Do not love the world or the things in the world” (I John 2:15) – and then conclude that our parental calling is to pull our kids away from everything about life on this earth and then shelter them in a bunker. But is that what this verse is calling us to do?

It’s important to understand what is meant by the word *world* in John’s imperative. The Bible uses the word *world* in three different ways. First, to refer to the material earth that’s been made and filled by God. Second, to refer to human beings who inhabit this earth God has made. And third, to refer to any area of creation that’s been polluted by sin and is therefore moving in a direction away from serving and glorifying God. Theologian David Wells defines this as “the ways of fallen humanity, alienated from God and his truth.” Being *worldly* means to adopt priorities and allegiances that are ungodly. This is the way *world* is used in I John 2:15.

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

I John 2:15

As you raise your children and teens, your goal should be not to separate them from the created order or from those who inhabit the world. We are not to lead our kids into a bunker. Instead, we are called to teach them to live in the midst of fallen humanity, enjoying the good fruit of the cultures that fill the earth. However, we are to teach them to wisely and with discernment avoid adopting ways of thinking and acting that reject the lordship of Christ over all areas of their lives.

PODCAST



The Word in Youth Ministry

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

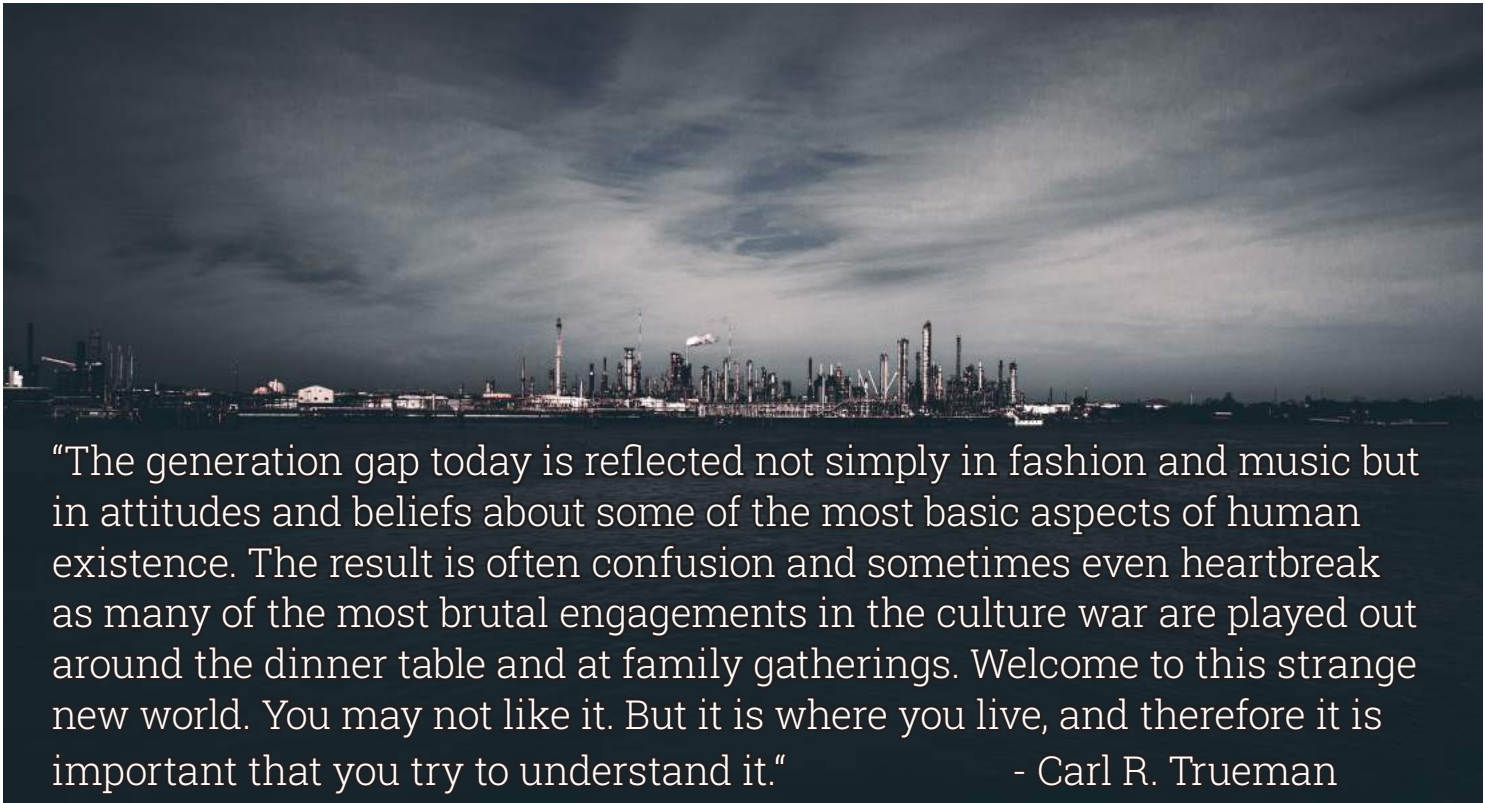

The WORD
in Youth Ministry

A CPYU PODCAST

BE SURE TO CHECK OUT EPISODE 26 -
TEACHING THE BIBLE:
MATTHEW 7

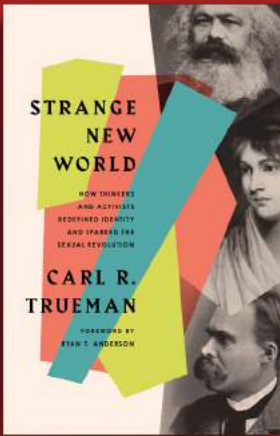


LISTEN AT WWW.CPYU.ORG/TWIYM



“The generation gap today is reflected not simply in fashion and music but in attitudes and beliefs about some of the most basic aspects of human existence. The result is often confusion and sometimes even heartbreak as many of the most brutal engagements in the culture war are played out around the dinner table and at family gatherings. Welcome to this strange new world. You may not like it. But it is where you live, and therefore it is important that you try to understand it.” - Carl R. Trueman

**HELPFUL
RESOURCES**



BOOK

How did the world arrive at its current, disorienting state of identity politics, and how should the church respond? Historian Carl R. Trueman shows how influences ranging from traditional institutions to technology and pornography moved modern culture toward an era of “expressive individualism.” Investigating philosophies from the Romantics, Nietzsche, Marx, Wilde, Freud, and the New Left, he outlines the history of Western thought to the distinctly sexual direction of present-day identity politics and explains the modern implications of these ideas on religion, free speech, and personal identity.

For fans of Trueman's *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*, *Strange New World: How Thinkers and Activists Redefined Identity and Sparked the Sexual Revolution* offers a more concise presentation and application of some of the most critical topics of our day. Individuals and groups can work through the book together with the *Strange New World Study Guide* and *Strange New World Video Study*.