



# RULES, RULES, RULES

Did you know that in Morrisville, Pennsylvania it is illegal for a female resident to wear makeup unless she has secured a permit? I'm not sure where that rule came from, but it's one of the many crazy rules and laws that exist here in my home state.

Want to know more? In our state, it is illegal to catch a fish with your bare hands. Discharging a cannon during a wedding is prohibited. It is illegal to sing in a bathtub. And for those of us who love those Philly soft pretzels, one old law prohibits you from putting those regional treats in a bag. Why? Apparently during the days of prohibition people would hide alcohol in those same pretzel bags. These rules don't sound so bad when you consider that in North Dakota you aren't allowed to lie down and fall asleep with your shoes on! I'm glad I don't live in North Dakota! 😊

While we may laugh at the ridiculous nature of the aforementioned rules, we all realize that good rules serve us well

as they promote decency and order, while serving as guardrails to keep us from falling into dangerous, sinful, and immoral practices. As Christians, we recognize that the Ten Commandments were given by God to guide us, first and foremost into a proper relationship with Him, and then to lead us into living in relationship with each other in ways that give Him honor and glory. In the New Testament, Jesus tells His followers that if we truly love Him, we will keep His commandments (John 14:15). Good rules are necessary!

Just as our parents set up rules for us, we show our love for our children by setting rules that will protect them from harm, provide for their well-being, help them to maintain order and discipline in their lives, guide their actions, and teach them how to live in harmony with others, both now and for the rest of their lives. Without good rules our personal lives, families, and society would rapidly enter into chaos.

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## YOUTH CULTURE

## HOT QUOTE

Freya India, a freelance writer who writes often about Gen Z women, in her online newsletter *GIRLS*, [freyaindia.co.uk](http://freyaindia.co.uk), June 4, 2024.

*"It's hard to put this into words but I think, in some ways, what we actually want is to be humbled. People say we crave belonging and connection, but what if we also crave commandments? What if we are desperate to be delivered from something? To be at the mercy of something? I think we underestimate how hard it is for young people today to feel their way through life without moral guardrails and guidance, to follow the whims and wishes of our ego and be affirmed by adults every step of the way. I'm not sure that's actual freedom. And if it is, I'm not sure freedom is what anyone of us actually wants."*



“REGULARLY DO A ‘DISORDERED LOVES’ INVENTORY (AN IDOL INVENTORY), AND REGULARLY CONFESS YOUR SINS TO YOUR FRIENDS OF VIRTUE AND SEEK THEIR PRAYERS.”



Luke Bobo

I recently read an article from my friend Luke Bobo which describes another kind of rule that it’s important for us as Christian parents saved by grace to embrace, follow, and pass on to our kids. It’s known as “a rule of life.” It’s not a set of laws, but rather a set of practices, commitments, and guidelines that reflect and facilitate the advancement of our Christian faith, leading to what Luke calls “a renovation of our hearts.” Luke himself adopted his rule of life so that he would always be advancing toward the goal of becoming a virtuous person who loves, serves, and glorifies God. Luke’s ‘rule of life’ incorporates six practices that each of us can adopt in our own lives and teach to our kids.

**First, think God’s thoughts.** This is foundational to all of life and priority one! Read the Bible daily and journal your thoughts and reflections. Pray Scripture throughout the day. Read and meditate on what you’re reading over and over and over again. If we aren’t filling the well of our lives with God’s Word, we will come undone.

**Second, work and rest.** All work matters to God, and all work should be done to the glory of God as an act of worship. Just as God rested from His work of creation on the seventh day, so must we. We live in a day and age that values what’s now being called “grind culture,” where we are expected to work and work ourselves into burnout. But that’s not God’s plan for us. Sabbath is a gift from God given to us for our good and His glory.

**Third, feed your imagination.** One way we do this is to exercise the gift of reading. Get off your phone, turn off Netflix, and pick up some books. Luke’s personal rule is to read two fiction books for every non-fiction book you read.

**Fourth, steward your body.** Watch your eating. Avoid habits and addictions which undermine your physical health and lead to disease. Exercise at least three times a week. For your children, encourage free play outside in the neighborhood.

**Fifth, take a social media sabbath.** We should be doing this once a week. But what about taking at least two 30-day breaks from all those social media platforms which take up so much of our time and energy, leading us into the dangerous world of things like comparison and digital addiction?

**Sixth, cultivate your heart.** Luke says, “Regularly do a ‘disordered loves’ inventory (an idol inventory), and regularly confess your sins to your friends of virtue and seek their prayers.”

While rules can be ridiculous, burdensome, and constraining, we all know that good rules advance our flourishing as we seek to grow into the image of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Adopting, living, and teaching a rule of life helps us be the people we’re called to be.

WALT MUELLER  
CPYU President



## FROM THE NEWS

### Addictive Nature of Social Media

In a recent article in the *Harvard Business Review*, Kelsey Hansen writes about social media addiction as something that her younger self struggled with, even though at the time she didn’t realize just how addicted she was becoming.

She confesses to noticing that her attention span and mental capacity were suffering. She’d be working on her school assignments, but constantly and repeatedly interrupting her work, checking on her social media accounts. She cites Max Fisher’s book on the designed addictiveness of social media, titled *The Chaos Machine: The Inside Story of How Social Media Rewired Our Minds and Our World*. Fisher talks about how social media platforms are designed to trigger a dopamine release in our brains. He writes, “Dopamine creates a positive association with whatever behaviors prompted its release, training you to repeat them.” This applies even to self-destructive behaviors. Parents, set borders and boundaries, and teach your kids to redeem their time.

## TRENDS:



## Tween Skin Care Craze

If you don't think that marketing to kids and concerns about body image aren't having an impact on children when they are of elementary school age, think again. Thanks to kids using smartphones and gaining access to TikTok and YouTube influencers, even pre-pubescent girls are concerned about the effects of aging on their skin. Consequently, many are spending large amounts of their parents' money and huge amounts of time on high-end skin care products and routines including moisturizers, masks, mists, and cleansers. It's gotten to the point that this is what a growing number of our pre-teen girls are asking for on their birthday gift lists. We should be concerned about their susceptibility to marketing and peer pressure, the promotion of vanity, and the resulting cost both financially and in terms of stress and anxiety. But we also need to be concerned about the growing body of evidence showing that these things are causing short and long term damage, including burns, rashes, and other allergic reactions.



## LATEST RESEARCH:

## Bible Reading

Earlier this year, the American Bible Society released their 14th annual *State of the Bible* report, which is put together to track cultural trends in the United States regarding spirituality and engagement with the Bible. This year's report shows some encouraging trends regarding Gen Z – those born between 1997 and 2012 – and their relationship with the Bible. The folks at the American Bible Society rightly report that we live in a busier and busier world, which leads many to put their Bible's aside or never engage in Bible reading at all. This has led to a decrease in Bible reading among the younger generations in recent years.

However, this year's report tells us that 54% of Gen Z adults, ages 18-27, agree that the message of the Bible has transformed their lives. That's up from 50% in the prior year. Parents, this trend is sure to continue if we each make regular time to read the Bible with our children, thus fulfilling our calling to nurture our kids in the faith.

## QUICKSTATS

7 in 10 teens age 13-18 say they have used at least one type of generative AI (artificial intelligence) tool. 56% say they have used search engines with AI-generated results, 51% have used chatbots/text generators, and 34% have used image generators.

*(Common Sense Media, The Dawn of the AI Era)*

19% of parents say their child has no friends or not enough friends, while 90% say their child would like to make new friends. 71% of parents describe taking action in the past year to help their child make new friends. 59% of parents feel it is very important that they know the parents of their child's friends, while 29% are very concerned about their child's friends encouraging their child to do things parents don't approve of.

*(C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, National Poll on Children's Health)*

# TOP 10

## GROSSING MOVIES OF 2024 (SO FAR)

U.S. Domestic  
Box Office for 2024  
(as of 10/31/2024)  
**Source:**  
*Box Office Mojo*

1. Inside Out 2
2. Deadpool & Wolverine
3. Despicable Me 4
4. Beetlejuice Beetlejuice
5. Dune: Part Two
6. Twisters
7. Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire
8. Kung Fu Panda 4
9. Bad Boys: Ride or Die
10. Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes



## DEALING WITH SINFUL CHILDREN

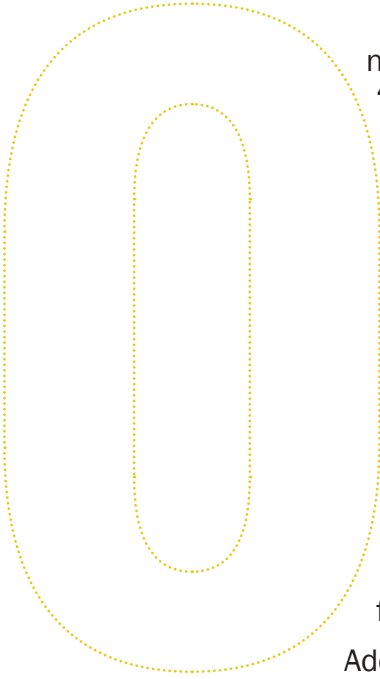
by WALT MUELLER

All teenagers face great temptation. All teenagers make sinful choices that are at times devastating to themselves and to others. It's who we are as broken human beings. But here's some great advice for parents: The most important factor in determining whether that bad choice turns into a situation that gets better or worse is parental response.

What would happen if your goal would be to redeem these situations by turning a mistake into an opportunity for your teenager to become a more Christ-like person?

I am constantly reminded of my responsibility to treat my sinful children the way my heavenly Father treats me when I'm the offending party – because there isn't a day that goes by when I'm not. I learned a great lesson from Dr. John White when he was asked how he'd learned to relate to his own son's rebellious and sinful choices. Dr. White said he's learned to live his life according to this simple and profound principle: "As Christ is to me, so must I be to my children."

# FROM THE WORD



One of the guiding principles of living life in today's world goes like this: "Just follow your heart!" In other words, "if you want to know right from wrong, truth from lies, and the path to take in all the big and little decisions that come in life, just look within. What is it that you feel? What are your desires? Listen to these things. . . and then do them!"

This dangerous way of living was promoted well in the song "Follow Your Heart" from the 2002 Disney film, *Cinderella II: Dreams Come True*: "So make your own way/ Show the beauty within/ When you follow your heart/ . . . You'll shine bright as the sun." It's a dangerous sentiment, couched in Disney cuteness, that's completely contrary to the guidance we find in Scripture.

**"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?"**

**Jeremiah 17:9**

Addressing the people of Judah who had strayed from God, the prophet Jeremiah delivered a direct and unmistakable message regarding the condition of the human heart. Because everything in the world has been marred by sin - including our hearts - our feelings and desires are broken as well. Why then should we put our trust in something that will mis-lead us? Jeremiah's words would not have been needed if the people had been living under the trustworthy authority of God instead of their own hearts. The writer of Proverbs tells us, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:5&6). Teach your kids to place their trust in God and not themselves.



## PODCAST



*The Word in Youth Ministry*

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

**BE SURE TO CHECK OUT EPISODE 77:**

**"HELPING TEENS EMBRACE THEIR COMPLETE IDENTITY IN CHRIST" WITH PAUL TAUTGES**



**LISTEN AT [WWW.CPYU.ORG/TWIYM](http://WWW.CPYU.ORG/TWIYM)**



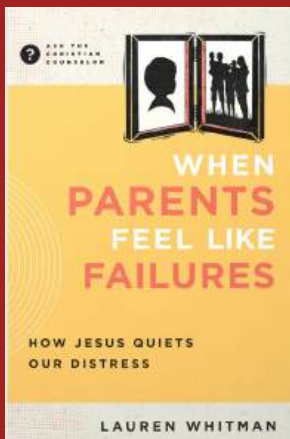


ASK THE  
CHRISTIAN  
COUNSELOR

TRUSTED COUNSELORS  
OFFER BIBLICAL ANSWERS  
TO LIFE'S STRUGGLES



HELPFUL  
RESOURCES



BOOK

For every parent who has ever laid awake reviewing the mistakes and missteps of their day, Lauren Whitman points them to Jesus, who quiets our distress with his love and forgiveness.

Parents often struggle with four deeply distressing emotions: fear, guilt, shame, and regret. Many parents feel resigned to the fact that these emotions will always just be a part of their experience. But Lauren Whitman, a counselor and mother, helps parents see Jesus's compassion and receive the comfort he offers them in their distress.

While many resources help moms and dads grow in how they parent, few help parents with addressing feelings about unrealistic expectations, perceived mistakes, and supposed failings. *When Parents Feel Like Failures: How Jesus Quiets Our Distress* is an encouraging, grace-centered book that helps us see ourselves and the Lord more accurately.

- Learn that God's love has the power to quiet the internal churn of hard feelings that parents experience.
- Helps parents realistically reflect and evaluate themselves and the job they are doing in a favorable light.
- Part of the Ask the Christian Counselor series, walking readers through their deepest and most profound questions.
- Compact format goes deeper than New Growth Press's popular minibooks without overwhelming the reader.



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