

## TOO MUCH ME

"Oh, how cute!" I watched as a couple of adoring grandmotherly types stopped in the store to admire the little toddler being pushed by her mother through the aisles. Yes, the little girl was quite cute. But I'm not so sure about the graphic T-shirt she was wearing. Her T-shirt loudly proclaimed, "It's All About Me!" As I walked away I wondered to myself, "If that's how that mother is treating her daughter, how will that notion mis-shape and destroy her life?"

Okay, okay. It's just a T-shirt. But its message is one that we increasingly live out in today's world. . . and that's not a good thing. Isn't that what got us into trouble in the first place? Everything was perfect for our first parents as they inhabited the Garden given to them by God as a place for them to live to *His* glory. But all that goodness came undone as our first parents ushered corruption into the world by giving in to the tempter's

invitation to be like God. By making it all about themselves and bowing to the idol of "me, myself, and I," our first parents set the course that each of us have followed.

Sadly, when we share with our kids the life-giving corrective offered in the words of Jesus when He invites us to "deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24), our kids filter His words through a culture that consistently screams the exact opposite message. Marketing messages foster entitlement by encouraging our kids to satisfy their personal wants and desires without care or concern for others.

The Apostle Paul warned the young Timothy that in the "last days" (using the present tense to indicate the here and now) people would become "lovers

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### YOUTH CULTURE

### HOT QUOTE

**Dr. Jason Nagata, associate professor of pediatrics at the University of California, San Francisco, speaking about a new study he coauthored about young adults, muscle-building supplement use, and muscle dysmorphia, CNN.com, February 19, 2025.**

*"Social media posts about muscle-building supplements and anabolic steroids overwhelmingly demonstrate positive muscle-building effects. Social media can exacerbate body comparisons and lead to muscle dissatisfaction and the use of anabolic steroids or other muscle-building drugs and supplements in teens."*



“THE SCRIPTURES  
TEACH US THAT  
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IDENTITY AND  
PLACE IN CHRIST.”



of their own selves” rather than “lovers of God” (II Timothy 3). In today’s youth culture, we see this reality encouraged, embraced, and lived out in three ways.

**First, there is the emergence of Narcissism.** Rooted in the story from Greek mythology about the young self-obsessed Narcissus, Narcissism is defined as self-love, vanity, conceit, arrogance, and self-centeredness. Our children and teens are susceptible to this because of where they’re at in their development. Ego-centrism, if you remember, is a huge reality during our growing up years. This combines with the cultural push to indulge and serve self to push them away from a desire to deny self and follow Jesus.

**Second, there is “expressive individualism.”** This is the now commonly-held belief that a person’s highest loyalty is to himself or herself. True happiness is achieved through being true to what one feels like at any given moment in time. Consequently, there is little or no regard for Scripture, parental authority, or the call to follow Jesus.

**Third, the current cultural focus on self has led to the fluidity of identity.** The Scriptures teach us that freedom comes in finding one’s identity and place in Christ. . . which leads to a desire to conform to His will and His way. The culture encourages us to place ourselves at the center of our lives and universe. As a result, we have the freedom to choose our source of meaning, free from any outside borders, boundaries, constraints, and influences. We call this “authenticity.”

Parents, to nurture our kids in the faith requires us to know both *Word* and *world*. The world is pushing our kids to love themselves with reckless abandon. Sadly, that is *not* the way to life. Instead, the *Word* offers the way, the truth, and the life through self-denial. Are you pointing your kids to a life of bringing glory to God, or a life that brings glory to self?

**WALT MUELLER**  
CPYU President



## FROM THE NEWS

### GEN Z and BOTOX

In a 2024 article in *USA Today*, dermatologist Dr. Brooke Jeffy talks about the recent obsession among Gen Z with getting Botox injections to correct perceived cosmetic flaws.

Concerned about starting to look old, these young people are getting hammered with social media posts and videos that are fueling their anxiety about aging, and promoting Botox as a remedy for their concerns. Dr. Jeffy says that it’s mostly not necessary and just a real source of anxiety. She continues, “Oftentimes they’re moving their face and we don’t even see wrinkles, but this is what they’re afraid of.” A recent survey by the American Academy of Facial and Plastic Reconstructive Surgery says that close to three out of four plastic surgeons report an increase in the number of patients under the age of 30 requesting these treatments. The reality is that aging is a consequence of humankind’s sin, and no injection can fill a facial wrinkle or hole in the soul in ways that satisfy. Only Jesus can.



## TRENDS:



## Technoference

Several decades ago, media and communication theorist Marshal McLuhan was warning us that the technological tools we create and embrace have long-term effects that are not always positive. He said, "first we shape our tools, and then our tools shape us." Now that the smartphone has been present in our culture and lives for over seventeen years, we are seeing how our lives and relationships are changing. A college professor named Brandon McDaniel coined a term that describes one such negative effect. The term is technoference. Simply stated, technoference occurs when our attention to screens disrupts our personal communication or time spent with others, including our family and friends. We constantly check our screens when we are in the presence of others or in conversation with others. Recent surveys tell us that more and more kids are complaining about the technoference that comes when parents spend too much time on their phones. Do you need to change your habits?



## LATEST RESEARCH:

## Bullying

A new report from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention looks at the issue of bullying in the lives of our twelve to seventeen-year-olds. The report defines bullying as occurring when "a person is exposed to aggressive behavior repeatedly over time by one or more people and is unable to defend themselves." More than a third of the kids surveyed say

they've been bullied over the past year. Over 38% of twelve to seventeen-year-old girls report being bullied, and just under 30% of the boys surveyed report being bullied. The report also found that bullying is more prevalent among twelve to fourteen-year-olds, at just over 38%, and less prevalent among fifteen to seventeen-year-olds, at

just under 30%. With bullying prevalent in today's teen culture, we need to teach our kids to show the love of Christ to their divine-image-bearing peers, and we need to minister well to our kids who have been victimized so that we might build their resilience.



## QUICKSTATS



Kids engaged in active play and physical activity are 1/10 as likely to be obese, score 40% higher on test scores, are less likely to smoke, use drugs, and get pregnant, as well as 15% more likely to pursue higher education.

*(Project Play)*

1.7% of 8th graders, 4.2% of 10th graders, and 8% of 12th graders admitted to vaping daily. Among those who vape daily, 70% reported that the number one reason they vape was to relax and relieve stress.

*(Pediatrics)*



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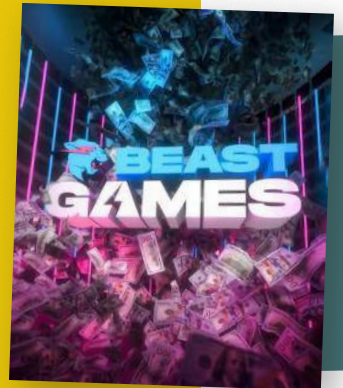
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## STREAMING TV SHOWS ON AMAZON PRIME

February 27, 2025

Source:  
FlixPatrol

1. Reacher
2. INVINCIBLE
3. Beast Games
4. Pop Culture Jeopardy!
5. On Call
6. Fallout
7. Cross
8. Clean Slate
9. George Lopez: Muy Católico
10. Tribunal Justice



## ENTRUSTING OUR CHILDREN TO GOD

by WALT MUELLER

My fourteen-year-old self had gone to bed at my usual 9pm time. Two hours later, I woke up to use the bathroom. While walking undetected past my parents darkened room, I not only heard my dad whispering, but I heard him whispering my name.

It was at that unforgettable moment that I learned that my parents' bedtime routine included intercession on behalf of their three children. I had been blessed with parents whose only stated hope for me was that I would grow up to love, follow, and serve Jesus Christ. As Christian parents, our hope for our children should be the same.

The good news is that parents always exercise the greatest influence on the spiritual lives of their children. God has established the home as the primary arena for spiritual nurture. This influence is effectively exercised as we entrust our children to God.

Entrusting our children to God includes tending to ourselves by growing in wisdom, teaching them biblical doctrine through family devotions and other teachable moments, and training them in righteousness so that doctrine is translated into everyday living.

# FROM THE WORD

What is our purpose in life? We discover our true purpose and identity when we see ourselves as individuals made in the image of God for a relationship with God. The way into that relationship with God is through following Jesus. Have you ever paused to ponder the wonder of God's grace? Isn't it amazing that He has provided a way back into relationship, purpose, and identity through Jesus Christ? Following Jesus is the path to life and salvation.

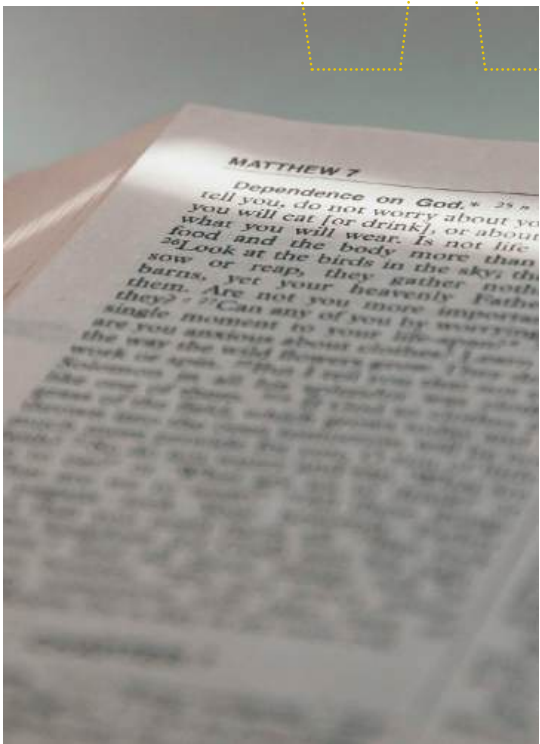
In Matthew 16:24, Jesus calls us to deny ourselves and "follow" Him. When Jesus called His first disciples to "follow" it was not a suggestion, but a command (Matthew 4:19).

One Bible scholar says that the word "follow" is "the Disciple's word." It's the word that's the key to life. It's the word used to describe a soldier who follows their leader or commander. It's also the word used to describe attaching one's self to someone, or to "stick to" someone.

**"Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.'"**

**Matthew 16:24**

Parents, Jesus uses the word "follow" to summon you and your children to Himself. It involves an act of self-denial and surrender that includes both a cost and a cross. But ultimately, it is the only way to freedom in this life and the next.



## PODCAST

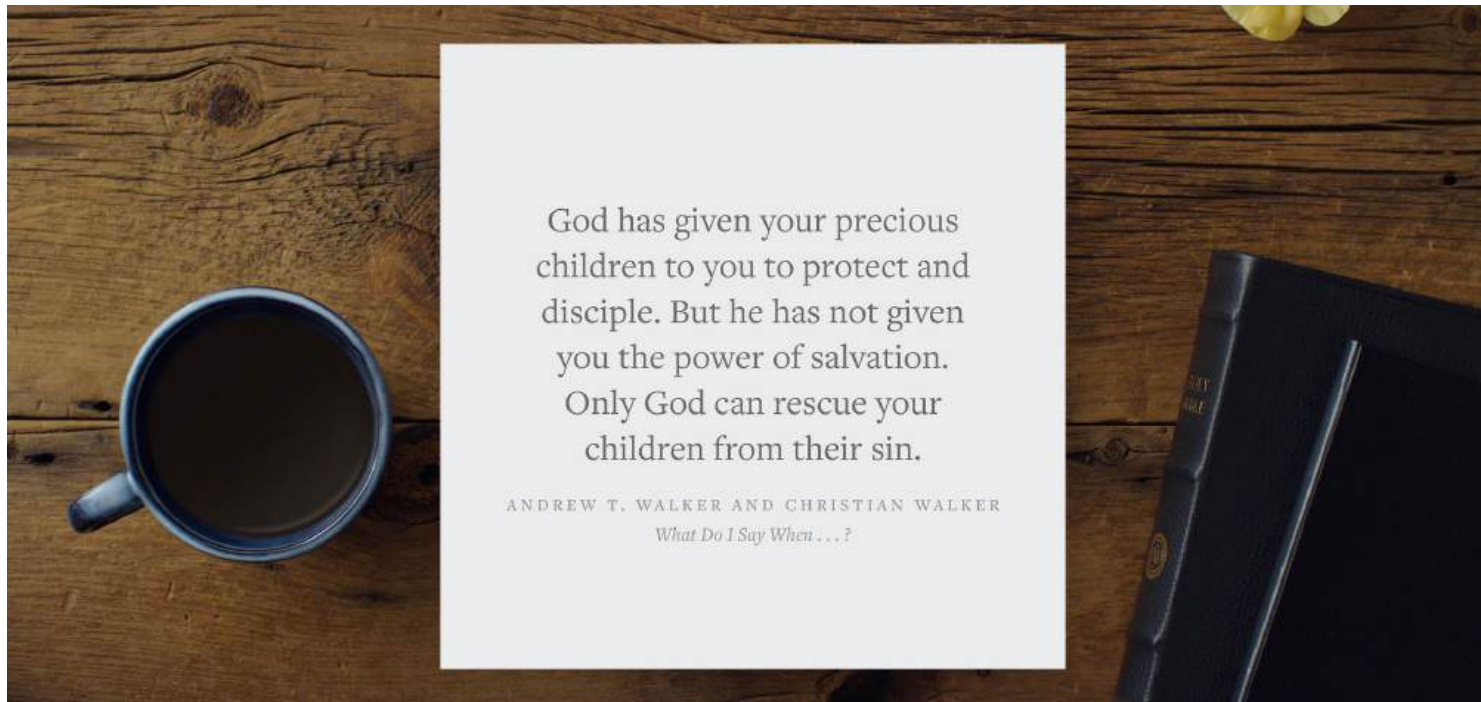


*Youth Culture Today with Walt Mueller  
is a one-minute daily radio show  
and podcast from CPYU.*

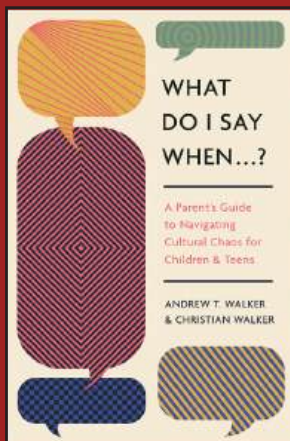
**A NEW SHOW IS POSTED  
EVERY WEEKDAY!**



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



# HELPFUL RESOURCES



## BOOK

### Answers to Tough Cultural Questions Presented to Christian Parents

Navigating the world for the first time can be challenging, especially when popular cultural beliefs contradict the teachings of Scripture. So when inevitable questions arise, parents must be equipped with sound biblical answers to guide their children through the complexities of modern life—because if we fail to catechize our children, the world will surely step in to do it for us.

Written by husband and wife duo Andrew and Christian Walker, *What Do I Say When...?: A Parent's Guide to Navigating Cultural Chaos for Children and Teens* is an accessible and trusted guide that helps busy parents quickly and effectively respond to their children's questions on a wide range of topics, including abortion, sexuality, transgenderism, technology, political engagement, and more. Each chapter contains age-appropriate prompts for parents of children at different stages of development and maturity. Parents can refer to each chapter as specific questions arise, study hot-button topics for future reference, or access a range of conversation starters to proactively cultivate biblical truth within their child's heart.

- **Written for Busy Parents:** Empathetic in tone, this book helps parents quickly access answers to the most important topics confronting our youth today
- **Helpful Resources:** Each chapter features a biblical overview, basic truths every parent should know, conversation starters, memory verses, and recommended resources
- **Current:** Addresses important cultural topics, including human dignity, abortion, sexuality, transgenderism, technology, political engagement, and more