

THE PRAYING PARENT

WALT MUELLER, CPYU President



YOUTH CULTURE HOT QUOTE

“Because of social media, we are becoming master manipulators, constant performers, and no one is better at these endeavors than young adults, because they are learning earlier and earlier that these skills are central to success, either social or professional.”

Donna Freitas, in *The Happiness Effect: How Social Media is Driving a Generation to Appear Perfect at Any Cost*, p. 76



With my own four children now out of their teenage years and into adulthood, I've had plenty of opportunity to think back on my own parenting journey. On the one hand, I'm grateful for the Godly advice that was given to me by older parents who had already raised their now adult children. All of the good advice I had chosen to follow paid great dividends. On the other hand, hindsight leaves me with some regrets. . . things I wish I had done differently as a dad.

One of my personal parenting regrets relates to prayer. Yes, we prayed for our children. But all too often those prayers were squeezed in between other activities on our busy and frantic schedules. Looking back, I also realize that our prayers were “amped up” in frequency and intensity when we were in the midst of navigating difficult parenting matters with our kids. I'm sure that's not unusual, but I do wish that the frequency and intensity of those “tough time” prayers was the usual rather than the from time-to-time.

Since this is the month that we celebrate Easter, why not take some time to challenge yourself to pray regularly for your children in the same manner that Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before His death. In Matthew 26:39 we read: “Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.’”

The great English preacher Charles Spurgeon wrote that there are five aspects to the way Jesus prayed in Matthew 26:39 that we would do well to emulate. How might enlisting each of these aspects change the way you pray for your children?

First, our prayer for our children should be *lonely prayer*. This does not mean that we are to feel alone as we parent our kids. Rather, we are to look regularly for opportunities to withdraw from all the regular activities, hurriedness, and distractions of life to focus solely on prayer. He

was deliberately by himself where no ears but God's ears would hear his prayers. A lonely prayer is an intense and focused prayer.

Second, our prayer for our children should be *humble prayer*. When Jesus approached his Father in prayer he fell with his face to the ground. This was a position that represented humble recognition of his Father's power, sovereignty, and holiness. Sometimes we get lost in thinking that we know what to do and how to do it. Reality is, that if we depend solely on ourselves and not on God for guidance, direction, wisdom, and power, we are doomed to eventually fail. It's better to humbly fall flat on your face while crying out to God in prayer, than falling flat on your face through failure rooted in self-reliance.

Third, our prayer for our children should be *filial prayer*. The word “filial” signifies the affection, respect, and devotion from a son or daughter to a parent. Jesus assumed a filial posture as he approached his Heavenly Father. In the same way, those of us who have been adopted by God as His sons and daughters must “plead” our adoption, recognizing that God has given us the right and privilege to approach Him as His children.

Fourth, our prayer for our children should be *persevering prayer*. The Bible tells us that while he was in the Garden, he prayed three times. Prayer for our children should be regular and ongoing.

And fifth, our prayer for our children should be *submissive prayer*. If you're like me, your prayers are uttered while assuming that you know what the most desirable answer and outcome should be. But the prayer of Jesus reminds us that we must trust God's wisdom, as He will give us the answer we need. We must pray, “not my will, but Your will be done.”

Perhaps you've only understood Easter as a time to celebrate new life. But Easter is much more than that. This year, make it an opportunity to learn new ways to pray. ✨

Source:
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FOREVER
21

1. Forever 21



HOLLISTER

2. Nike

3. American Eagle Outfitters

4. Hollister

5. Urban Outfitters

6. PacSun

7. Adidas

8. Aéropostale

9. American Apparel

10. Hot Topic

QUICK STATS

Among college student spring breakers, 38% said they regretted drinking alcohol, 32% said they regretted a sexual encounter and 11% said they regretted drug use.

(ProjectKnow)

27% of 10- to 18-year-olds named social networking sites as their favorite news source.

(Common Sense Media)

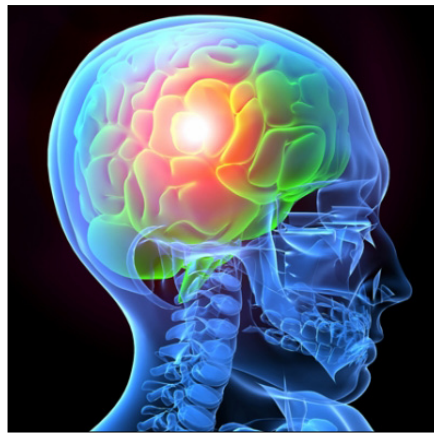
FROM THE NEWS:

PARENTS AND SCREEN TIME

Last year we shared some startling new information on teens and screen time from our friends at [Common Sense media](#). It was reported that teenagers are now spending an average of nine hours a day engaged with screens. Now, the folks at Common Sense Media have released some new data that's not about teenagers, but about parents. Are you ready for this? It seems that we are not only no different from our kids, but that we're providing them with compelling models of screen engagement that are somewhat distressing. Parents of tweens and teens spend more than nine hours a day engaged with screens. In spite of this, 78% of parents feel that they are good role models for their children when it comes to media and technology. Perhaps we should think again. Parents, our practices shape us. How we spend our time tells us just what's important in our lives. Are you forfeiting daily time with the Lord and your children by wasting too much time with media?

TRENDS: STI INCREASE

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are reporting a spike in sexually transmitted infections among young people. Specifically, instances of chlamydia are up nearly six percent since 2014. Instances of gonorrhea are up nearly 13%. And instances of syphilis are up nearly 19%. The CDC is also reporting that almost 20 million new cases of STIs occur every year, over half of them afflicting people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four. The CDC is also reporting that the reason for this sudden spike is that many young people are not wearing condoms. As Christians, we want to be about the task of leading our kids into a healthy experience of sexuality that gives honor and glory to God. Sex is a good gift from God that is to be enjoyed between one man and one woman, within the context of a committed marriage. We flourish spiritually, emotionally, relationally, and physically when we endeavor to find our sexual freedom within God's parameters.



LATEST RESEARCH: NON-CONCUSSIVE HEAD INJURIES

Three million children are involved in tackle football programs here in the United States. You've no doubt heard about the growing concerns related to kids, football, and the impact of concussions on their brains both in the short and long-term. Now, researchers at Wake

Forest University are studying the impact of less-serious blows to the head and what they do to football players ages eight to thirteen. This is important research as the brain is in the middle of a particularly vulnerable stage of change during this period of life. MRIs on test subjects indicate that there are some changes in the brain's white matter, which is the tissue that connects the gray matter of the brain. And the more exposure a boy has to head impacts, the greater the amount of change, even after only one season of playing youth football. While more research is needed to determine the long-term impact of non-concussive hits, parents are wise to consider the possible effects and safety of their sons.

COLLEGE TRANSITION INITIATIVE

a resource of CPYU



www.CollegeTransitionInitiative.com

Connecting College Students to Church

by Walt Mueller



Studies say that up to 65 to 80 percent of young people who grow up in the church drop out of church when they become college-aged. The reasons for this are many. They arrive on campus and get so busy that they don't make time for church or campus fellowship groups. Others cave to the peer pressure to immerse themselves in the campus social scene, and even may be ostracized if they choose church over what everyone else is doing. And, among a host of other reasons, a student might not know where to begin to find fellowship on campus.

Parents, youth workers, and pastors should be working together to foster continued church involvement and spiritual growth long before a student leaves for campus. Here are some initial simple steps to take:

- Make the importance of a lifetime of involvement in fellowship a lifetime conversation. Don't wait until the day, week, month, or even year a student leaves home to have the conversation.
- Once a student leaves for college, check in regularly to encourage them to connect with a fellowship group and church. Use texts, calls, and even hand-written letters to stay connected.
- Finally, enlist the help of the College Church Connection (collegechurchconnection.org), an organization that will research and recommend fellowship opportunities on campuses around the country.

Podcast

Youth Culture Matters is a long-format podcast from CPYU.

Co-hosted by Walt Mueller and Jason Soucinek, each episode features an interview with an expert in a youth culture related field.



Listen at
www.cpyu.org/podcast.

FROM THE WORD

Perhaps you've heard the old saying, "Idle hands are the devil's workshop." But, it's not just a life spent lazily doing nothing that thwarts and derails Christian growth. It's also being way too busy.

As parents, we tend to get wrapped up in the frantic pace of life that's being lived by just about everyone else around us. Time flies, important tasks fall by the wayside, and before we know it, our kids are all grown up. And one of the most important endeavors that we tend to let fall by the wayside is tending to our own spiritual growth. When the tanks of our spiritual lives empty out or run on fumes, we lack the ability to pass on faith to our kids. With no spiritual vitality to give, they are left with no spiritual vitality to get.

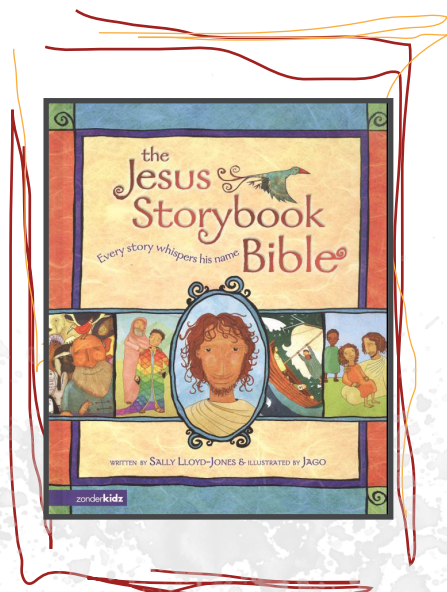
Psalms 119 is a poetic call to immerse one's self in God's Word. The Psalm's length (it's the longest chapter in the Bible) emphasizes the urgency of the Psalm's message. In verse 11 the Psalmist shares his resolve to fill his being with the truths of God's Word. Constantly "shoveling" God's Word into the storehouse of our hearts results in a life of faithful obedience. Consequently, when we run dry as a result of biblical ignorance, we not only suffer, but that suffering extends to our kids. Theologian John Stott says, "Ignorance is probably the greatest enemy of the Christian faith today."

Do your kids have parents who are ignorant? Or are they blessed with parents who are wise?

**"I HAVE STORED UP
YOUR WORD IN MY
HEART, THAT I MIGHT
NOT SIN AGAINST YOU."
PSALM 119:11 (ESV)**

HELPFUL RESOURCE ←

The Jesus Storybook Bible written by Sally Lloyd-Jones tells the Story beneath all the stories in the Bible. It takes the whole Bible to tell this Story. The author notes that at the center of the Story, there is a baby, the Child upon whom everything would depend. From Noah to Moses to King David, every story whispers his name. Jesus is like the missing piece in a puzzle – the piece that makes all the other pieces fit together. From the Old Testament through the New Testament, as the Story unfolds, children will pick up the clues and piece together the puzzle. A Bible like no other, *The Jesus Storybook Bible* invites children to join in the greatest of all adventures, to discover for themselves that Jesus is at the center of God's great story of salvation—and at the center of their Story too.



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