


**YOUTH CULTURE
HOT QUOTE**

“It doesn’t make you popular. It doesn’t make you fun to be around. I hate bullies. You know what I love? I love girls who want to gang up for good, that want to have a drama-free time in their school.”

Demi Lovato, speaking at the Young Women’s Leadership School, September 20, 2012

NEGATIVE Peer Pressure

WALT MUELLER, CPYU President

When they become teens, our kids will be tempted, to one degree or another on numerous occasions, to become like chameleons. In an effort to protect themselves from feeling like they’ve been left alone to wander through adolescence, our teens will change colors and blend in with the surrounding environment of . . . the peer group. As Christian parents, what can you do to equip your teens to weather the inevitable peer pressure storm in a way that brings honor and glory to their Heavenly Father?

First, recognize that peer pressure reaches its greatest intensity during the adolescent years. Along with the rest of the teenage population, your teen is experiencing the natural adolescent shift in social focus from her family to her peer group. They begin to disengage from the family while forming more and more relationships with same-sex and opposite-sex peers. Consequently, they will sometimes look for guidance and direction from their peers.

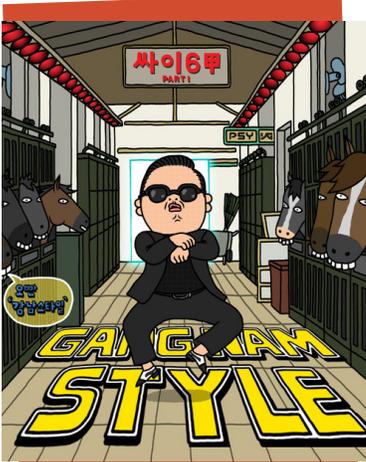
Second, recognize that the nature of peer pressure has changed since we were teens. Peer pressure used to take the form of a verbal invitation to come and participate in some behavior that both you and the person inviting you to do it knew was wrong. There was always that element of sneaking around. Today, peer pressure typically takes the form of an unspoken expectation to participate in behavior that the great majority of the peer group believes to be normal and right. Today, it’s much more difficult for our kids to go against the flow when the behaviors promoted aren’t sneaky, but celebrated.

Finally, peer pressure shouldn’t lead us to wave the white flag of surrender. Instead, it should motivate us to do all we can to encourage and equip our kids to stand firm in the midst of their pressure-filled lives. Realize that negative peer pressure is a spiritual battle that all of us fight constantly. Like the apostle Paul, we will find ourselves baffled by our behavior (Romans 7:15-24). But like Paul, we can see the way out of our struggle with sin through Jesus Christ (Romans 7:25). Pray, pray, and continue to pray for your kids in the midst of pressure so intense that it can leave you and them feeling helpless and hopeless. Examine yourself and your lifestyle to see how your example teaches them to handle negative peer pressure. Model a lifestyle of discipleship and, by doing so, show your kids that following Christ is not always the easy choice but is always the right choice. Actively help your children realize their value and worth in God’s eyes so that they are less prone to seek their satisfaction by conforming to the images of the world. Get your kids involved in a positive peer group – perhaps a strong church youth group – where following the narrow path that leads to life is celebrated and affirmed by both leaders and students alike.

Help your kids to understand the truth of Proverbs 13:20 – that for better or for worse, friends always do influence friends. ✱

Songs in the iTunes Store

{ september 27 }



1. "Begin Again" by Taylor Swift

2. "Gangnam Style" by PSY

3. "Die Young" by Ke\$ha

4. "Diamonds" by Rihanna

5. "One More Night" by Maroon 5

6. "We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together" by Taylor Swift

7. "Finally Found You" by Enrique Iglesias

8. "Some Nights" by fun.

9. "Too Close" by Alex Clare

10. "Whistle" by Flo Rida



QUICK STATS

25.1 percent of 12 to 20 year olds have used alcohol in the past month. (2011 National Survey on Drug Use and Health)

Though 97 percent of teens say they know it's dangerous, 43 percent admit to texting and driving anyway. (AT&T survey)

FROM THE NEWS:

DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

Here's some research that you might find surprising. It's research related to teenagers and driving under the influence. The bad news is that according to Liberty Mutual and Students against Destructive Decisions, thirteen percent of teenagers have driven a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol. The good news is that if it wasn't for instilling in kids the importance of not driving while drunk, that number could be a whole lot higher. But here's the really troubling news. Almost twenty percent of teenagers have driven a vehicle while under the influence of marijuana. This is the kind of research that should wake us up to talk to our kids about the dangers associated with marijuana use. Smoking pot is not only dangerous, but illegal and wrong. Smoking pot and then driving ups the ante on the danger as you now become a risk to others. With the use of marijuana on the rise among young people, we must take the time to warn, monitor, and discipline our kids to keep them from being a danger to themselves and others.

TRENDS: VIDEO GAMING ANYWHERE

When it comes to teenagers and media, it's not enough for us to know when they are using media and what media they are using. It's also important for us to know where they are using their media. In years past, a parent could reasonably assume that any teenager who plays console video games like Nintendo or X-Box, would be playing the games on a TV set placed in a common area of the house, like a living room or family room. This would allow parents to more closely monitor the time their kids spent gaming and the content of the games. New research from Nielsen Media indicates that 12-17 year olds are now playing games just about anywhere in the home, including basements, bedrooms, and even garages! Fifty-two percent of their time spent with a gaming console happens in either non-traditional spaces or bedrooms, compared to the forty-eight

percent of gaming done in family rooms. We live in a media-saturated world where we should be concerned about media content and media time. It's difficult to monitor either if our kids are gaming out of our view.



LATEST RESEARCH: YOUNG ADULT ARREST RATES

Sadly, our children and teens are growing up in a world that is missing its moral compass. Add to that the fact that fewer and

fewer kids have deep relationships with adults who are willing to teach them right from wrong, and it might not surprise you to learn that by the time they turn 23, between twenty-five and forty-one percent of young adults have been arrested. This is according to an eleven year long study published in the journal *Pediatrics*. Dr. Eugene Beresin, a child psychiatrist at the Massachusetts General Hospital says, "Those are alarming numbers. There are social, economic, educational and family risks associated with arrests. . . and we all have to be worried about that." Our society needs to sit up and take note of what's happening. We need to realize that these arrests are symptomatic of deeper

issues. Parents, realize that your children are sinful and broken, just like you. God has given us the responsibility to raise them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, teaching them to understand and live His will and His way.

by Derek Melleby, Director CTI

**COLLEGE
TRANSITION
INITIATIVE**
a resource of CPYU



Sociologist Donna Freitas makes three important discoveries in her groundbreaking research and book *Sex & the Soul: Juggling Sexuality, Spirituality, Romance, and Religion on America's College Campuses*. After many years interviewing college students, here's what she learned:

First, most students don't want to participate in the hookup culture but feel pressured to for lack of an alternative. There has been a significant shift in college student relationships. Here's the big difference: It used to be dating that would lead couples toward intimacy and

sex. Now it is almost reversed, it is sex that (sometimes) leads to a dating relationship. Second, while many students identify themselves as "spiritual," their spirituality has very little influence on their sexuality. Freitas' conclusion includes evangelical students: "The overwhelming majority do not know how to reconcile their religious identities with their sexual selves." Third, even though most students are frustrated and have been hurt by the hookup culture, they have very few places to openly discuss their concerns. Students desperately need safe places to have serious conversations about sex.

The research included students at Christian colleges as well. While the hookup culture was not as prevalent, students still felt like they had limited ways to discuss sexuality on campus. Freitas offers this warning: "To go off to college—or to send your child off—without an adult conversation about sex in higher education is irresponsible." For seniors beginning their final school year, there will be many important conversations about college: where to go, what to study, how much it will cost. Freitas reminds us of another important topic to discuss: sexuality and relationships.

Want more information about your kids and their world? Visit us on the web at WWW.CPYU.ORG or scan the code below with a smartphone to subscribe to our free weekly e-Update!



FROM THE WORD

The Old Testament's book of Proverbs is rich in wisdom. In fact, that's why it was written. In the first chapter of Proverbs we learn that the book was written to "give prudence to the simple" and "knowledge and discretion to the young" (1:4). Over and over the writer of Proverbs refers to "my son," an indication that the book is especially helpful for us as parents as we work and pray to instill wisdom for life into the hearts and minds of our children and teens. If you are a parent who endeavors to take every opportunity to instruct your kids in God's will and way for their lives (see Deuteronomy 6:1-9), you should be passing on the wisdom of Proverbs.

**"HE WHO WALKS WITH THE WISE GROWS WISE, BUT A COMPANION OF FOOLS SUFFERS HARM."
PROVERBS 13:20**

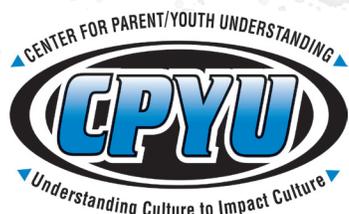
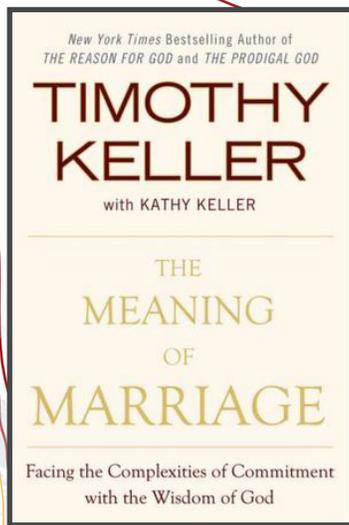
In Proverbs 13:20 we find some of the Bible's best and most direct advice on the kinds of company we should keep. In Eugene Peterson's *The Message*, this verse is rendered this way: "Become wise by walking with the wise; hang out with fools and watch your life fall to pieces." Yes, the company that we keep does matter. Actor Will Smith captured a practical reality of the consequences of choosing friends when he said this: "Look around at your five closest friends and that's who you are."

As you look for ways to teach your kids about the importance of choosing good friends, take some time to ponder the company you keep. As we endeavor to grow in our likeness to Christ, we should be choosing and moving in a close circle of friends who look like Him. . . and who will make us wise!

PARENTING RESOURCE ←

Let's face it. We've lost our bearings when it comes to marriage. The institution ordained by God as part of the Creation still exists in name, but it looks very little like it should. When it comes to our understanding of love, sex, and marriage, we're terribly confused. None of those three God-made realities are culturally understood or practiced in ways that bring glory to the One who made them.

One of the most pressing issues facing the church today – grandparents, parents, and children – is the recovery of marriage with a deep understanding of covenant love and the gift of marital sexuality. In effect, we need to shut down, take a deep breath, reboot, and start from square one. Best-selling author Timothy Keller and his wife Kathy do just that in their book, *The Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of Commitment with the Wisdom of God*.



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