

ADOLESCENCE: HOW WILL IT END?

WALT MUELLER, CPYU President



YOUTH CULTURE HOT QUOTE

“We have teenagers in the house, so it’s very difficult, 90 per cent of the focus is Willow; a 14-year-old girl takes all of the attention. It’s everything; it’s like the world ends three times a week. It’s like 14-year-old girl Independence Day at my house every week.”

Actor Will Smith, father of 2 teenagers, speaking on *The Late Show with David Letterman*, February 19, 2015



French film director Jean-Luc Godard once said that “a film is the world in an hour and a half.” If that’s the case, then the award-winning and critically-acclaimed *Boyhood* is 12-years-of-adolescence-and-youth-culture in 165 minutes... and it’s worth every parent’s time.

Boyhood was filmed over a 12-year-period using all the same cast. We literally watch them grow up. It traces the story of Mason Evans and his sister Samantha as they navigate their rocky childhood and adolescence. While the film is void of any sort of conventional “start – middle – and finish” plot line, it’s precisely the absence of a conventional plot that makes “*Boyhood*” so valuable to us dads and moms.

On the one hand, *Boyhood*’s 12-year scope allows us to step back and look at how our kids and their culture are changing. We also see how the culture we live in shapes and changes us. As I sat and watched Mason and everything around him change, I was deeply struck by just how necessary it is for parents to know what’s happening in today’s youth culture.

For almost two decades now I’ve been communicating what I’ve come to call “the four bullet points” to parents. These are general observations about Mason’s world in *Boyhood* that should instill in us a sense of urgency to be faithfully present in the lives of our kids.

- First, there’s the fact that there’s more pain and brokenness. The institutions that should be there for kids are largely absent. *Boyhood* projects many of these changes – from family brokenness, to

sexual confusion, to peer pressure, to substance abuse, to family violence - on the big screen for all to see.

- Second, there’s “age-compression.” In other words, the difficult and confusing realities of life that many of us experienced during the later years of our own adolescence, kids are now facing before they even start elementary school.

- Third, there’s “any kid, anytime, anywhere.” In other words, no child, no teen, no family is immune to life’s difficulties and the resulting fallout. Parents, we’re only fooling ourselves if we think that our kids don’t have to deal with this kind of tough stuff.

- And fourth, we know that sooner or later every young person will have to sort through all the compelling voices and choices that culture throws at kids today. Consequently, all parents must prepare their kids to face these inevitable youth culture pressures.

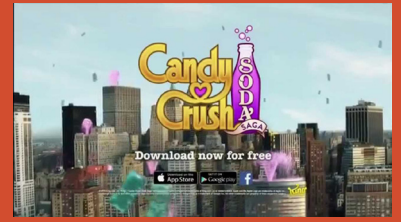
While *Boyhood* offers us a valuable window into the world of kids, there is something even more valuable that it does for parents. You see, without voices speaking truth into their lives, each of our kids will continue on a life trajectory that could parallel Mason’s. . . a life trajectory void of redemption and hope. *Boyhood* has no ending. Reality is, we are left as parents with the option to contribute to the writing of Mason’s story, and *Boyhood* effectively reminds us that this is the case. That’s why each of us should give it a look, and then respond by proclaiming *the destination* – the Gospel - for which we all long. ✱

Ads Among Millennials Featuring a Popular Song

Source:
Nielsen TV Brand Effect,
Date Range 2/1/2014 - 1/31/2015



1. *King.com Games of Skill (Candy Crush Soda Saga)* - "I Want Candy" by Bow Wow Wow
2. *Coca-Cola (Winter Activities)* - "Make Someone Happy" by Jimmy Durante
3. *Beats by Dre (Beats Pill XL)* - "I Can't Make You Love Me" by Priyanka Chopra
4. *Coca-Cola (People Together)* - "Rather Be" by Clean Bandit
5. *Nutella (Families and Friends)* - "Happy Place" by Oh, Hush! featuring Hanna Ashbrook
6. *Beats by Dre (Powerbeats2 Wireless)* - "Pay For It" by Jay Rock featuring Kendrick Lamar
7. *Yoplait (Yogurt Flavors)* - "It Takes Two" by Rob Base
8. *Amazon.com (Getaway Vacation)* - "Chupepe" by Cocoon
9. *Yoplait (Grabbing Yogurt from Fridge)* - "All Day and All of The Night" by The Kinks
10. *Gatorade (Slam Dunk)* - "Slam" by Onyx



QUICK STATS

In the U.S., more than 24 million children live in a home where there is no father physically present.

(U.S. Census Bureau)

Online girls are more than twice as likely as online boys to report contact from someone they did not know that made them feel scared or uncomfortable.

(Pew Research Center; Teens, Social Media, and Privacy report)

FROM THE NEWS:

COLLEGE STUDENTS, RAPE & CONSEQUENCES

In recent months, the issue of sexual assault and rape has been addressed in a series of televised public service announcements designed to stem the tide of sexual violence.

These commercials remind us how pervasive the problem is, and of our need to take calculated steps to inform our children and teens about God's order and design for his good gift of sex. Recently, male college students were surveyed and asked to self-report their likelihood to engage in certain types of sexual behavior, including forcing a female to do something sexual that she does not want to do, and rape, if they would never be found out and if there weren't any consequences. Alarming, one-third of the young men said they would force sexual intercourse if there were no consequences. Most of the participants wouldn't classify such behavior as rape. If there was ever a time to directly change culture's course in terms of prevalent sexual attitudes, it's now. Talk to your kids about love, sex, and marriage.

TRENDS: TEENS AND LACK OF SLEEP

Did you know that for healthy growth and development, our teenagers need between nine and ten hours of uninterrupted sleep each and every night? And, did you know that more than ninety percent of American high school students are chronically sleep-deprived?

How much sleep are your kids getting?

Without an adequate amount of sleep, our teens are more likely to face a host of physical, mental, and cognitive problems. The reasons for sleep deprivation are many, including things like late bedtimes, too many organized activities, too much homework pressure, and waking up to check a cellphone.

Parents, God has given us the responsibility to protect our children from harm and to provide for their well-being. Check you teenager's sleep habits and make adjustments where necessary. Don't let them sleep with their phone in their room. Set a curfew. And make sure that they are getting at least nine hours of sleep a night.



LATEST RESEARCH: DEVELOPING READERS

It's been said that "readers are leaders." It's important to encourage your children to become well-rounded readers. By virtue of reading, young readers also stimulate their brains to grow and thrive, which

results in the ability to read at higher and higher levels over time. According to a new reading assessment report, we aren't doing a good job at teaching our kids to read. In fact, the average U.S. college freshman reads at a seventh grade level. Parents, God has called us to nurture and raise our children to His glory by encouraging them to develop

their intellectual gifts and abilities. This includes reading. Experts say that reading development starts in elementary school as students are encouraged to read both in and out of the classroom. Help your kids set limits on screen time and get them interested in reading books. By reading, they will not only sharpen their abilities, but they will learn about the wonder of God's world.

Become the authority:

You, as a parent, should be the first and last place your children hear about sex and relationships. Typically the more religious a family is the less likely they are to talk about these things in their home. In a study conducted at Penn State, it was found that most students had never talked with their parents about sex, or if they had, it was a very elliptical discussion full of warnings and dangers. Breaking this cycle starts in the home where you can communicate your values and repeat them often. Remember, your voice matters. Study after study shows that you have the most influence on your teens' sexual choices. Use it!

Protect what you can and create a safe place for conversation:

Safeguarding every area of your children's life is almost impossible. But you can establish boundaries for your family with digital covenants that you each agree to, utilizing parental controls where you are able, and downloading accountability software as needed. These tools help protect your family in certain situations, but for those times when you cannot protect them, it is essential to maintain open streams of communication on this subject. This means treating discussions on sex as an ongoing dialogue rather than only a "BIG Talk."



SEXUAL INTEGRITY INITIATIVE

A resource of CPYU and Project Six19

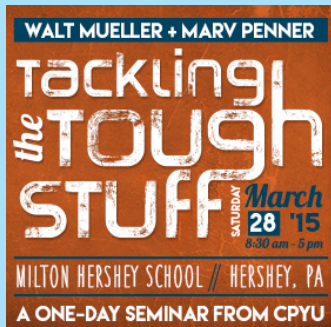
2 Tools for Parenting in a Sexually Charged World

by Jason Soucinek



Seminar

Join CPYU for a one-day seminar titled
“Tackling the Tough Stuff.”



Saturday, March 28th, 2015
on the campus of the Milton Hershey School, Hershey, PA.

Walt Mueller and Marv Penner will tackle the tough teen issues of **suicide, depression, self-injury, narcissism and pornography.**

More details at www.cpyu.org.

FROM THE WORD

In the first chapter of John we are told that “the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us” (NIV), or as Eugene Peterson so wonderfully puts it, “moved into the neighborhood.” (The Message). That may sound a bit odd, but that is in fact what God did. While we were lost in our sin, God didn’t tell us that we had to figure out our own way to get to Him... because we can’t! Instead, He came to us... in our own form, on our own turf, in our own “neighborhood.” In order to reach us, God became one of us. As a result, we could see Him, understand Him, and receive the life-changing Good News of the Gospel!

**“THE WORD BECAME FLESH
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THE NEIGHBORHOOD. WE SAW
THE GLORY WITH OUR OWN
EYES, THE ONE-OF-A-KIND
GLORY, LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON,
GENEROUS INSIDE AND OUT,
TRUE FROM START TO FINISH.”**

JOHN 1:14 (THE MESSAGE)

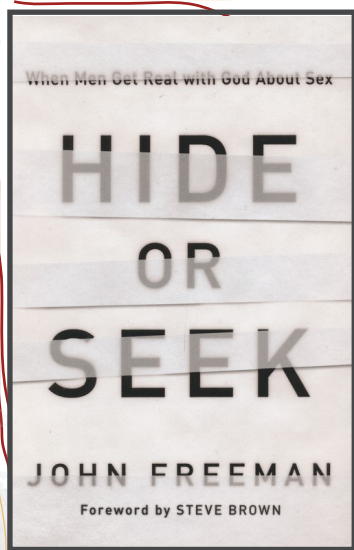
The incarnational ministry of Christ is one we should model in our own lives as we seek to minister to our children. Times have changed, and the culture our kids live in is far different from the one in which we were raised. We can’t expect our kids to meet us in our world. Instead, we need to be incarnate. That means we need to enter their world and to understand their culture. If we can do that, we will earn their respect and they will be more likely to listen to us as we communicate the Good News about Jesus Christ.

Yes, times have changed, but God’s message hasn’t. Let’s take that message and live it out—incarnationally—in the “neighborhood” of our primary mission field: our kids and their world.

HELPFUL RESOURCE

Are you stuck in a never-ending cycle of defeat that fills you with shame, prevents you from leading your family well, getting involved in the church, and spending your time and money on the things that really matter? You have everything to gain and nothing to lose by ending this cycle.

You are not powerless in the fight against pornography and lust. *Hide or Seek: When Men Get Real with God About Sex* won’t ask you to jump through a series of hoops; it will simply suggest one clear step forward. One step to reorient your heart toward God’s love for you. One step to take the energy out of the vicious cycle that keeps you from being the man God has called you to be, the man you want to be. Don’t settle for the cycle. Discover how the Gospel speaks in practical terms to the most private areas of your life and how God offers the freedom you desire. *Hide or Seek* is easy-to-read, full of real-life stories, and points you to the hope for change that many men have given up on finding.



Available in the
CPYU Resource Center at
www.cpyuresourcecenter.org.



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