

YOUTH CULTURE HOT QUOTE

What is new and dangerous is the ability to post selfies, then wait for approval to come flooding in. You don't have to spend long with an insecure teenage girl (is there any other kind?) to work out that her happiness is tremulously yoked to the getting of Likes or little lovehearts on Facebook or Instagram. Take that female insecurity, warp and magnify it in the internet Hall of Mirrors, add a longing to be "fit" and popular, then stir into an ubiquitous porn culture and you have a hellish recipe for sad, abused girls.

Journalist Allison Pearson, in her article titled "Pornography has changed the landscape of adolescence beyond all recognition," *The Telegraph*, April 22, 2015



HELPLESS IS A GOOD PLACE TO BE

WALT MUELLER, CPYU President



Contrary to the belief we've somehow come to hold that deciding to follow Jesus is the path to a happy and easy life where we inherit the entitlement of a pain-free and problem-free existence, the Scriptures speak from beginning to end about the presence and benefits of suffering. The Bible teaches us that suffering and difficulty lead to spiritual growth, a deeper understanding of and dependency on God, and even Salvation. Feeling helpless is indeed, a good place to be!

James tells us that we are to "consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance," which lead us to maturity (James 1:2&3). Many of our teens find adolescence to be a painful and trying time. It becomes the same for us. Together with our kids, we can experience the joy of going deeper with God in dependence on Him during the earthquake of adolescence.

When I look back on the difficult times in my life and in my journey as a parent, I sometimes wonder if I could rewind and do it all over again, would I choose to change circumstances and events so that I would never have experienced helplessness? The answer is "no!" You see, in the midst of our helplessness, God comes to us and reminds us of our need to exercise total dependence

on Him. He is faithful, promising us the precise measure of grace we need to endure and overcome in times of trial. Suffering and helplessness are redemptive as God does His work in us. In fact, God is in the business of parenting us, while we are locked in the midst of parenting the children He's given to us.

Your teen will most likely experience difficult times as they go through the change and question-filled adolescent years. As the parent of a teenager, chances are you will be given the gift of difficult times as you live through it with them. Michael Card reminds us that "the path to God is through the wilderness. There, and only there, will we learn what God is truly worth. There we discover His provision: manna, quail, living water. But more significantly, along this path we experience His Presence and discover it is more precious than His provision."

From a human perspective, these are the times when God does His best work in our lives. Their growing up is an opportunity for us to grow up. . . and for us to model to them what it means to grow up in Christ. If helplessness comes through adolescence taking the form of "the wilderness" in your home, embrace it. In fact, I would suggest that we even pray for the blessing of suffering to come.*

TOP...

American Teens' Favorite Social Networks

Source:
Teens, Social Media & Technology Overview 2015
PewResearchCenter



1. Facebook
2. Instagram
3. Snapchat
4. Twitter
5. Google+
6. Vine
7. Tumblr
8. "Other"



QUICK STATS

Teenagers ages 16-19 who spent more than 2 hours after school engaged in screen time experienced greater difficulty falling asleep and a shorter duration of sleep. When daytime screen use totaled 4 or more hours, teenagers had a 49% greater risk of taking longer than an hour to fall asleep.

(BMJ Open, February 2, 2015)

Nationwide, 15% of 9-12th grade students had had sexual intercourse with 4 or more persons during their life.

(Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance - U.S. 2013, CDC)

FROM THE NEWS:

PALCOHOL

This summer, we will see the debut of what's being called "Palcohol." The product is made by a company named Lipsmark and it was recently approved by the federal government. Palcohol is actually alcohol in powdered form. Concerns over abuse by minors, smuggling it into public events and places, and the ability to spike someone's drink have caused many states to consider, introduce, or pass legislation banning Palcohol. Experts are right in assuming that the risk for abuse of this new product is very high. Since the powder comes in packets, over-consumption is a very-real possibility, whether unintended or deliberate. Because Palcohol comes in a variety of flavors, it will be especially attractive to teenagers and young children. In addition, the fact that the alcohol is in powdered form makes it highly likely that it will be snorted through the sinuses, leading to immediate effects. Parents, keep an eye on what's happening with Palcohol where you live. And as always, we urge you to warn your kids about the dangers of this new drug.

TRENDS: PROMPOSALS

With prom season once again in full-swing, there's a new prom ingredient that's costing our kids lots of money, and is worth our time and attention. This new prom phenomenon is known as the "promposal." A promposal is an elaborate invitation to the prom that is much like a carefully planned and executed marriage proposal. Teens are employing surprises, staged events, billboards, and jumbotron screens in an effort to one-up and out-do everyone else. There's even a Pinterest page featuring promposal ideas. A new nationwide survey by the folks at Visa tell us that the promposal is costing the average American household with teenagers a whopping \$324 this year. In fact, the promposal price now makes up almost a third of the total cost per person for attending a prom. The question we must ask is how much is too much? And where will this all stop? Once again, we recommend that you encourage your kids to exercise the highest principles of biblical stewardship in all of life, including the prom.



LATEST RESEARCH: SEXUAL AGGRESSION

It should be no surprise that the hypersexualization of our culture along with the rapid spread of pornography has led to more sexually aggressive behavior among young people who have been nurtured by these messages. Now, the CDC is reporting that 21% of high school girls say they have been physically or sexually assaulted by someone they dated, a figure that is 2X higher than what was previously estimated. In addition, 10% of high school boys report being physically or sexually assaulted by a dating partner. Researchers are also saying that they're seeing this kind of violence in children as young as ten and eleven years old. In the book of Ephesians, the Apostle Paul instructs Christ's followers to be kind to one another, to be tenderhearted, and to be compassionate. Parents, this is a message we must communicate to our kids along with God's standards for their sexuality. We must counter the negative influence of a sexually aggressive culture by pointing our kids to God's will and God's way.

CPYU'S DIGITAL KIDS INITIATIVE



Smartphone Addiction

by Walt Mueller



Researchers at Britain's University of Derby have confirmed a reality that's part and parcel of living in today's wired-up world. It seems that our smartphones really are addictive, and the more we use them, the more addicted we become. The study found that 13% of us are now addicted to our smartphones. The study also found that the average smartphone user spent 3.6 hours a day on their device. 35% of users were so attached to their devices that they admit to using their smartphones in areas and places where smartphones are banned. And lest you think that the University of Derby researchers were studying only teenagers, you might be surprised to learn that the average age of the study's subjects was 29 years-old! Yes, smartphone addiction is a problem that spans all ages.

Some of the signs of smartphone addiction to look for in your kids and yourself are moodiness, loneliness, jealousy, and obsession with physical appearance. Are you or your kids addicted to your smartphones?

Here are some simple and straightforward boundaries you can establish to keep you and your kids from getting smartphone addicted:

- Establish smartphone-free zones in your home.
- Eat your meals together around the table. . . and leave your smartphones somewhere else.
- Put your phones aside and ignore them when you are in a personal, face-to-face conversation.

Website

Did you know that CPYU offers tons of free resources on their website for parents, youth workers, pastors and others who work with children and teens?

Visit WWW.CPYU.ORG to browse the site and explore!

FROM THE WORD

When your teenager makes decisions that are sinful and wrong, it can leave you reeling and full of questions. You will find yourself asking, how could this happen? Why did this happen? Have I done anything to cause this? God, what are you trying to teach us? God, do you even care? Will my child get through this?

The first part of Psalm 13 records the words of a helpless person longing for answers and hope: "How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me? Look on me and answer, O Lord my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death; my enemy will say, 'I have overcome him,' and my foes will rejoice when I fall."

**"BUT I TRUST IN YOUR UNFAILING LOVE; MY HEART REJOICES IN YOUR SALVATION. I WILL SING TO THE LORD, FOR HE HAS BEEN GOOD TO ME."
PSALM 13:5-6**

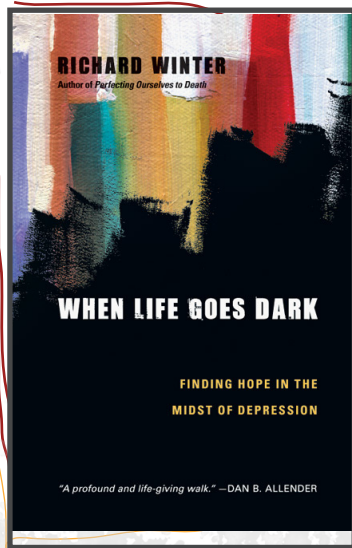
There will be times when your feelings of helplessness keep you locked on those first few verses of Psalm 13. But at some point, God will graciously bring you through those words to the point where you can join with the Psalmist in celebrating God's goodness through the last two verses of Psalm 13: "But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, for he has been good to me."

HELPFUL RESOURCE ←

Depression strikes millions, across all ages and demographic groups. Approximately 1 in 8 will have a severe depressive episode at some point in their life. Women experience depression twice as often as men. And over 50% of people with serious depression do not get adequate help. What can be done?

In *When Life Goes Dark: Finding Hope in the Midst of Depression*, psychiatrist and theologian Richard Winter explores the complex medical and psychological issues surrounding depression. He sorts through recent scientific research on its biochemical and genetic causes and examines social and cultural factors. Winter also dispels common Christian misunderstandings of depression and looks at how biblical characters experienced severe despair. Throughout he offers ways to help the suffering. Even in the shadow of the valley of death, there is hope for healing and deliverance.

This book is a helpful guide for those who find themselves, their loved ones or those they counsel vulnerable to depression. Find here a framework both for understanding depression and for rediscovering hope.



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



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