



WHAT WILL I PASS ON TO MY KIDS?

The little girl's shirt was supposed to make me laugh: "I got my Daddy's temper and my Mama's attitude." I did laugh a little, but what it really did was get me thinking. Money and things are not the only inheritance possibilities. There are other guaranteed things that parents pass on to their kids. Genes and appearances are the things we always inherit, as they are rooted in biology. But in addition, parents always pass on things like character, beliefs, and behaviors learned from birth right up until the time they leave the nest as they have a front row seat to our modeling and example.

Have you ever wondered what combination of good, bad, and ugly you're passing on to your kids as they grow up under your roof during these most impressionable and formative years? I have... many times. I thought about

this recently when I was reading through the Ten Commandments. After proclaiming His rightful place as the Almighty God of the Universe, God commanded His people, "You shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). He then commands them to *never* engage in idolatry... a command so important and necessary that it runs throughout the entire Bible. Why? "For I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me" (Exodus 20:5). When His people choose to worship anyone or anything else, the result is the consequential fallout that will visit succeeding generations.

This principle of our sins effecting our descendants is seen elsewhere in Scripture (Exodus 34:6-7, Deuteronomy 5:8-10, Numbers 14:18-19, to name a few). One important clarification is that God *does not* punish children for their parents' sin, but that every individual is responsible for their own sin (Ezekiel 18:20, Jeremiah 31:30). What *does* happen is that our children will suffer consequences *because* of our sin, and unless God intervenes, those consequences will be passed on to succeeding generations.

You and I need to prayerfully take stock of our own lives, examining them under the light of God's Word to see where we may consciously and unconsciously be pushing God out of His rightful place in our lives. Here are some questions to ask yourself, not just once, but from time to time as our battle with our sin natures will continue until the day we go to be with Christ.

Are there *idols* in my life that I put before God? The *New City Catechism* defines idolatry as "trusting in created things rather than the Creator for our hope, happiness, significance and security." Some of the most sinister and

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YOUTH CULTURE

Matthew Gasda, playwright, author, director, and critic, writing for the Brooklyn underground publication *cracks in pomo: the zine* (short for Cracks in Postmodernity), summer 2025 edition.

HOT QUOTE

"I'm aware that my flip phone is holding the line for me. That if I bought a new iPhone, I would spiral into levels of depravity and stupidity, hitherto unknown, in that over time, I would lose even the ability to be aware of this, and that is really the danger of the smartphone. You stop being aware of what you could have been. You lose the mythic hope of being a fully-fledged human being, and you start to crave submission to the digital Oversoul."



sneaky idols of our age are sex, money, material things, sports, status, pleasure, power, achievements, social media influence and followers, appearance, leisure, and literally anything else that we allow to take God's place.

Are there *sinful habits* in my life that my children may see and repeat?

Substance abuse, lying, materialism, gambling, cheating, stealing, addictions, arrogance, pride, fear of man, or any other breaches of God's law not only serve as examples to them for *who* they should be and *how* they should live as they become adults, but they can easily lead to life-destroying consequences for our kids.

Are there *values* I hold that are contrary to God's will and way for His followers?

The light of God's Word shines brightly on the sin in our lives, including exposing sinful values and beliefs that we might not even know we hold. Our values, good and bad, are being learned by our vulnerable kids. Left unchecked, they are likely to live out those same values as they grow into adulthood, eventually passing them on to your grandchildren.

"Have you ever wondered what combination of good, bad, and ugly you're passing on to your kids as they grow up under your roof?"



Am I *modeling the fruit of the Spirit and Christlike love* in my marriage and other relationships? Many of us know firsthand the legacy that father absence, divorce, and the marital discord of our own parents has left on our lives. Children from homes filled with tensions, conflict, and unhappiness must deal with the natural fallout of things being not the way they are supposed to be. While healing may come thanks to God's grace, the fallout almost always continues at some level for the rest of their lives. In many cases, they repeat what they've seen and learned.

Am I failing to make the *spiritual instruction* of my children my top parenting priority?

Deuteronomy 6:1-9 along with Ephesians 6:4 remind us of this primary parental calling to nurture our kids in the faith, while Psalm 71:17-18 should be adopted by all of us as our overarching resolve to do this until we leave this earth. Ignore your parental responsibility and the culture *will* catechize your kids into serving the kingdoms of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Our sin hurts our children. Consequently, our obedience and continued growth in faith will help them flourish. The good news in all of this is that there is always room for the free gift of God's grace through Jesus Christ. Immediately after making his pronouncement of visiting the iniquity of parents onto children, God offers this *but*: "but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments" (Exodus 20:6). God says that through our obedience to His will and way, it will "go well with you and with your children after you" (Deuteronomy 4:40). All of us... sinful parents and children marred by the sinful legacy of the generation before... are able to come to the Cross in repentance to find forgiveness for our sins, new life, and strength to live to His glory. That's the legacy to pursue and pass on to your kids!

WALT MUELLER
CPYU President



FROM THE NEWS

Recovering Babysitting Culture

In a recent edition of the *Kids Today* online newsletter, correspondent Anna North asked, "What do we lose when teens don't babysit?"

In her article, North tells us how the teenage babysitting culture has changed over the years, with fewer and fewer teens actually babysitting, and fewer and fewer parents hiring teen babysitters. With a smaller amount of teens engaging in this once widespread rite of passage, North argues that kids are missing out on a formative experience that can build a teenager's confidence level as they learn to exercise responsibility. Kids who babysit others are given the opportunity to learn social skills, they learn to deal with problems, and they develop in their critical-thinking abilities. In a day-and-age when kids are tethered to their phones, and phones are even used as babysitters, why not encourage your kids to take a babysitting course and take on the babysitting responsibility? This is one more way to nurture our kids into a healthy adulthood.



TRENDS:



Time Spent with Video Games

A recent survey conducted in England asked parents to report on how many hours a week their 15-17 year-old boys were playing video games. The survey found that on average, the boys were gaming for almost 34 hours a week! Researchers were struck by the fact that in England, schools are expected to be open for 32.5 hours a week. What this means is that these boys were spending more time each week playing video games, than they were spending in school. Parents, we need to realize that our kids are being shaped by where they spend their time, who they spend time with, and what they spend their time doing. The teenage years are prime years for education, and what we learn then will shape or mis-shape us into who we are for the rest of our lives. This should remind us of the importance of time with family, time spent at church and in youth group, and the powerful role these things play in positive spiritual nurture. How are your boys spending their time?



LATEST RESEARCH:

Teenism

"Teenism" is a term found in Ellen Galinsky's book, *The Breakthrough Years: A New Scientific Approach to Raising Thriving Teens*. Galinsky says that teenism occurs when we as adults stereotype the teenage years and those going through them in negative ways. She says that teenism can not only harm our kids, but can

harm us as well, by putting us in an interactive posture with our kids where we assume negative things. When asked to describe the stereotype of an adolescent, researchers used negative terms, including moody, overly emotional, makes risky decisions, selfish, self-centered, impulsive, wild, rebellious, lazy, and awkward. When asked to describe the teens they studied,

researchers used positive words like motivated, creative, fun, curious, social, excited by life, and hardworking. As Christians, let's begin by looking positively on our kids, as at their core, they are divine image bearers.



QUICKSTATS



4 out of 10 13-17 year-olds say that social media platforms hurt their productivity. 45% say that they spend too much time on social media, the same amount also said that social media sites hurt the amount of sleep they get.

(Pew Research Center)

18-24 year-olds who had received their first smartphone at age 12 or younger were more likely to report suicidal thoughts, aggression, detachment from reality, poorer emotional regulation, and low self-worth. Early smartphone ownership was also found to be associated with early social media access, higher risks of cyberbullying, disrupted sleep, and poor family relationships by adulthood.

(Journal of Human Development and Capabilities)

III TOP III

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VIDEO GAMES AMERICANS ARE LOOKING TO BUY NEXT

Source:
Nielsen
Week ended
October 25, 2025
(Console and PC
Games)

1. Grand Theft Auto VI
2. Call of Duty: Black Ops 7
3. Battlefield 6
4. Fortnite
5. Minecraft
6. The Outer Worlds 2
7. Marvel's Wolverine
8. Ghost of Yotei
9. EA Sports Madden NFL 26
10. Ninja Gaiden 4
11. Roblox



ASKING GOOD QUESTIONS

by WALT MUELLER

I've become known around my house as the guy who asks too many questions. To be honest, I think I get a little annoying. One thing I've learned is that I need to ask good questions. Our tendency is to talk at, rather than listen to our kids. The bad news is that this approach is a communication killer.

Asking good questions serves to open the floodgates of communication by encouraging your kids to express themselves. Asking questions lets your kids know you want to hear what they have to say. Good questions asked at just the right time help teens think through their actions, process the decisions they've made, and consider the resulting consequences. Good questions give kids the opportunity to be treated like an adult, rather than a child.

And remember, good questions are differentiated from bad questions because they can't be answered with only one word or a grunt. Good open-ended questions start with words like "how," "why," and "what."

FROM THE WORD

In his first letter addressed to followers of Jesus, the Apostle John issues a six-word parting statement that is extremely direct and powerful. These six words remind us of just how easy it is to fall prey to ideas, habits, and things that become so important in our lives that they take the place of God. John writes, “Dear children, keep yourselves from idols” (1 John 5:21).

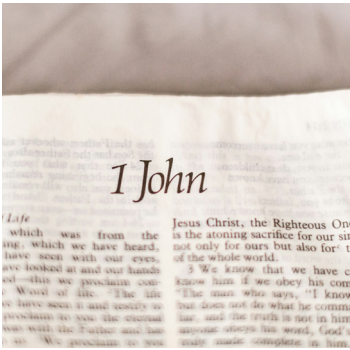
There is a fundamental incompatibility between the worship of God and the worship of idols. Idolatry has been defined as turning good things into “ultimate” things. How easy it is to do that in a world that pummels us daily with ads marketing all kinds of ideas, goods, and services. . . all promising to make our lives better. . . maybe even “complete.” And even for followers of Christ (as John surely knew), we are easily tempted, deceived, and capable of worshipping other gods.

This is a basic fact of our sinful and fallen human nature.

**“Dear children,
keep yourselves
from idols.”**

1 John 5:21

Realizing this ever-present reality is the first step in helping our kids understand that they too are easy prey for willingly falling into idolatry. Share John’s warning with your kids. . . not just once, but over and over and over again. Teach them to run from idols like the plague. Help them to look for and see the idols that are not easily recognizable. This conflict and temptation will not disappear until the day when Jesus returns and all things are made new. Keeping one’s self from idols is a conscious pursuit we must embrace, model, and teach. Our only hope for redemption is in Jesus Christ.



PODCAST




The WORD
in Youth Ministry

A CPYU PODCAST

The Word in Youth Ministry

is a podcast from CPYU for youth workers by youth workers.

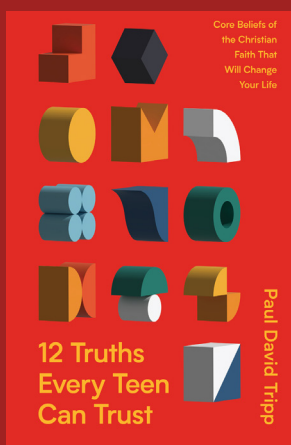
BE SURE TO CHECK OUT EPISODE 96:
**“STIRRING AN AFFECTION FOR
THE CHURCH” WITH KATIE
POLSKI**



LISTEN AT WWW.CPYU.ORG/TWIYM



HELPFUL RESOURCES



BOOK

As Christian boys and girls mature into righteous men and women, understanding the core tenets of the faith could not be more critical, especially as they face indoctrination from the outside world. But understanding doctrine is more than just comprehending the truths of Scripture; it's a God-honoring lifestyle shaped directly by biblical belief.

In *12 Truths Every Teen Can Trust: Core Beliefs of the Christian Faith That Will Change Your Life*, pastor and bestselling author Paul David Tripp examines 12 core doctrines of the Christian faith to see how they can transform a teen's heart and life. Using clear language and relatable examples, he defines doctrines such as God's sovereignty, justification, and glorification, helping young people fall deeper in love with their Creator and Savior. Each chapter explores a specific doctrine through 7 brief readings, making it perfect for daily study.

- **Accessible Book on Doctrine:** Features easy-to-understand language crafted especially for teens
- **By Paul David Tripp:** Excerpts adapted from his book *Do You Believe?*
- **Applicable:** Tripp unpacks 12 doctrines and presents their relevance for the Christian life
- **Perfect for Daily Study:** Each of the 12 chapters explores a specific doctrine through 7 readings (less than 450 words each)
- **Makes a Great Gift for Ages 13–18**