

# CPYU PARENT PAGE

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*"Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."*

- Proverbs 12:18

## THE BEST WAY TO LOVE OUR KIDS

BY WALT MUELLER

### TOP 10 MOST POPULAR CELL PHONES OF 2009 (SOURCE: ZDNet)

1. iPhone 3GS
2. LG enV Touch
3. Samsung Omnia
4. BlackBerry Storm
5. LG Dare
6. Motorola Droid
7. Palm Pre
8. LG Vu
9. Samsung Eternity
10. BlackBerry Bold

### YOUTH CULTURE HOT QUOTE

"Oh yeah, that happened to me. And I wasn't myself for a year. I think that was really damaging. I felt like it was me always trying to be perfect for him."

- Selena Gomez, when asked "Have you ever changed yourself for a guy you liked?" *Seventeen.com*

Think for a minute about the familiar opening lines from the famous Elizabeth Barrett Browning poem: "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways." If you were to ask yourself that question - replacing "thee" with the names of your children - what would your answer be?

If you're like me, you might begin by listing the many relational habits you strive to develop and keep. . . things like listening, being there, providing guidance, etc. Your answer might also include a laundry list of more tangible activity-type measures like buying clothes, cooking meals, doing laundry, driving to practice, paying for music lessons, trips to a trendy hair stylist, going on a family vacation, ensuring involvement in church, or supervising homework. All of these things are admirable and noble aspects of loving our children when they are done in the right measure and with the right motives. But are these really the *best* ways to love our kids?

February, the month when we traditionally focus on romance and love, is a good time to consider just how well we're doing at loving our kids. In a world where conventional and long-held parenting "wisdom" encourages us to love our kids by providing them with the staples of life and then indulging their desire for more with even more, what it means to *really* love our kids in the *best* way has perhaps been long-forgotten.

The element of foremost importance in loving our kids is this: to love God more than anything else and to serve Him with all we have, do, and are. When ap-

proached by the teacher of the law who asked about the most important commandment, Jesus answered by revealing the secret of what is most important in life: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30).

In her wonderful book "*Parenting Is Your Highest Calling*" and *8 Other Myths That Trap Us in Worry and Guilt*, Leslie Leyland Fields says that this commandment not only reflects the most essential truth about God (He is the One and Only), but also addresses our greatest and most constant temptation as parents to unseat God from His rightful place and replace him with our kids. In other words, when we love our kids too much we enter into idolatry by replacing the Creator (God) with the created thing (our kids). Fields goes on to say that "If I pursue God first as my highest call and am satisfied in his love, then I am freed not to love my children less, but to love them rightly. . . . We are asked to lose our lives in Christ's life, not in our children's lives. Our greatest faith and highest hopes are not in our daughters and sons but in the Son who has already come."

Loving our kids in this way cuts against the grain of what we're told in our culture, and sometimes even in the church. Pursuing God above all else is what we were made to do. The best way to love our kids is to do what we were made to do so that they might see a clear and unmistakable example of what it means for them to do what they have been made to do.

## CPYU TREND ALERT: WEAPONS AT SCHOOL

A few decades ago, one of the most prized possessions a boy could have was his trusty pen knife. In those days, it wasn't unusual to carry your knife to school, where you would show it to your friends at the bus stop or on the bus. Kids today find stories like these unusual, as they have grown up in a world where rampant school violence has occasioned strict, no-tolerance weapons policies. A recent study from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that in the last thirty days, 18% of students ad-

mit bringing a weapon to school. Half of them say they carried the weapon for protection, due to fears that they will be bullied. Others carry weapons to feel powerful and in control. This youth culture reality requires that we take the time to talk to our kids about school policies and the consequences of carrying weapons. We must talk to them about what to do if they are bullied, and the need to treat others with Christlike dignity and respect.

## LATEST RESEARCH: CHANGING VIEWS OF THE BIBLE

According to new research from the Barna Group, there are monumental shifts taking place in how people view the Bible. For example, 90% of 45 to 63-year-old baby boomers identify the Bible as sacred. But only 67% of 18 to 25-year-olds – also known as mosaics – identify the Bible as sacred. 46% of baby boomers strongly agree that the Bible is accurate, while only 30% of mosaics believe the same thing. Four out of ten baby boomers hold to a universalist view of the scriptures, believ-

ing that the Bible teaches the same truths as other sacred texts. Almost six out of ten members of the younger mosaic generation hold to a universalist view. The emerging generations are looking less and less to the Bible for guidance and direction. Fewer see it as God's unchanging word. What will the research say about our children and teens when they reach young adulthood? Parents, remember, be diligent in teaching and living the truths of God's word in your home.



### FROM THE WORD

You're no doubt familiar with the Old Testament book of Proverbs. The book tells us that it was written to give "prudence to the simple," along with knowledge and discretion (1:4). We are also told that heeding the words of Proverbs makes those who are wise even wiser (1:5). Who among us parents doesn't need prudence, knowledge, discretion, and even more wisdom?! The book of Proverbs is a gold mine brimming with parenting knowledge and principles that need to be reviewed over and over again.

Dr. Ted Tripp, author of the book *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, has found in Proverbs some wonderful guidelines for parents regarding the common communication pitfalls we so often fall into with our teens. Dr. Tripp reminds us that reckless words are extremely harmful, not only to our communication, but to our relation-

ships with our kids. The book of Proverbs tells us that reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing" (12:18). Dr. Tripp tells the story of visiting with a couple one night in their home. Their daughter came down the stairs dressed like a streetwalker. The father snarled, "Where do you think you're going dressed like that? You look like a slut!" She said, "I'm going out." And she went out the door. The dad turned back to continue his polite conversation. Should the dad have been concerned? Yes. He had to say and do something. But his words were reckless and destructive. That father didn't speak with the wise tongue that brings healing.

Parents, do you use reckless words with your kids? Evaluate the quality of your relationship, and make an investment with words that will pay great dividends in strength and influence.

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## IN THE NEWS: MEDIA VIOLENCE

The American Academy of Pediatrics is so concerned about the impact of media violence on children and teens, that they recently released a policy statement on media violence. The AAP believes that exposure to violence in media, including television, movies, music, and video games, represents a significant risk to the health of children and adolescents. Research shows that media violence can contribute to aggressive behavior, desensitization to violence, nightmares, and fear of being harmed. The AAP is going so far as to suggest doctors

intervene when they are concerned about media-related health risks. Parents, the responsibility lies first and foremost with you. Wise parents will heed the recommendation to teach media literacy skills to their children, while limiting the amount of time their kids are engaged with media. Our role is not only to protect our children from harm, but to provide for their well being by teaching them how to filter all they see and hear through the truth's of God's Word.

