

# PRIORITIZING FAITH

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## YOUTH CULTURE HOT QUOTE

*“It wasn’t their words, it’s that I started to believe them. Their words seemed to confirm what growing up as a woman and a person of color already taught me: that I belonged in margins and spaces, valid only as a minor character in their lives and stories.”*

Kelly Marie Tran, on the self-hate she felt and worked to overcome after online harassment over her ethnicity, *New York Times*, August 21, 2018.



School days are upon us and if your family is like most, your kids are involved in all kinds of extra-curricular activities that keep you running from here, to there, to everywhere. If we’re not careful, the school year will come and go so fast that we might get to June and realize we’ve pushed aside or even forgotten that our primary calling as Christian parents is not to serve our kids, but to serve our Lord by making the spiritual nurture of our kids our first priority.

With that in mind, here are four reminders that I trust will help you daily fulfill that nurturing responsibility in ways that will yield spiritual growth in your children and teens.

**First, keep the main thing the main thing.** I’ve heard it said that a parent’s checkbook and calendar are clear indicators of their parenting priorities. Go ahead and conduct an informal audit of both. Then honestly assess what that audit tells you about what you are communicating to your kids about what *is* and *should be* most important in life. Are they learning that following Jesus is just one more activity in a long list of things? Or, are they learning that following Jesus is the over-arching quest in life that should dictate everything else, including how we spend our time and money?

**Second, engage in idol-smashing.** We might not ever set up and worship a literal golden cow, but the reality is that in today’s culture, there are more idols than ever before that clamor for our attention and allegiance. Idolatry enters into our lives when we take a good and wonderfully created thing that’s been given to us by God, and we turn it into an ultimate thing that becomes an object of our worship. James tells us that “every good and perfect gift is from above” (James 1:17).

God has given us the goodness of created things not so they will become objects that we worship, but to point to our Creator (the giver of all good things) and spark our ongoing worship of Him. Whether it’s your children, your social standing, your online image, your kids’ grades and achievements, etc. . . “flee from idolatry” (I Corinthians 10:14).

**Third, teach your kids to integrate their faith into all of life.** God calls us to follow Him in every nook, cranny, and square inch of life. Paul Tripp writes, “If you’re God’s child, the gospel isn’t an aspect of your life, it is your life; that is, it is the window through which you look at everything.” Tripp challenges us to see the Gospel not only as an entry point (coming to faith) and an exit point (going to heaven), but as something for the here and now that should shape our identity, pursuits, and struggles. Are you teaching your kids how to integrate their faith into their academics, vocation, relationships, play, and everything else in life?

**Finally, force. . . yes force. . . your kids to rest.** Research points to the many ways in which over-scheduling and the pressures of life are leading kids into a constant state of anxiety and stress. Perhaps a long-overdue counter-cultural approach that’s obedient to the Lord’s commands is what’s needed. God made us for a rhythm of work and rest. Our bodies, minds, and spirits need to shut down regularly. Your kids need nine hours of uninterrupted sleep each and every night. We need a weekly Sabbath rest. And family vacations and time off are needed for rest and replenishment.

As the school year begins, why not seize it as a fresh start for your parenting priorities and practices? ✨

## Biggest 24-hour YouTube Music Video Debuts

Source:  
*Forbes.com*

1. **"IDOL" by BTS**
2. **"Look What You Made Me Do" by Taylor Swift**
3. **"Ddu-Du Ddu-Du" by BlackPink**
4. **"Gentleman" by Psy**
5. **"Fake Love" by BTS**
6. **"X (EQUIS)" by Nicky Jam and J. Balvin**
7. **"Hello" by Adele**
8. **"Boom Boom" by Daddy Yankee, RedOne, French Montana & Dinah Jane**
9. **"Wrecking Ball" by Miley Cyrus**
10. **"Despacito (Remix Audio) ft. Justin Bieber" by Luis Fonsi, Daddy Yankee**



### QUICK STATS

A recent survey of more than 17,000 youth sports officials found that 87% say they've been verbally or physically attacked by a spectator, and 47% have feared for their safety.

*(National Association of Sports Officials)*

Teenagers and young adults, ages 16-34, are spending an average of 6 hours a day glued to their smartphone screens.

*(Riddle and Bloom)*



### FROM THE NEWS:

## PARENTS, GIRLS, BODY IMAGE & THE POWER OF WORDS

A recent study in the *Journal of Adolescent Health* has found that how we talk about weight, especially with young girls, can have really negative effects on the later physical and mental health of those girls. Being called fat by family and friends may contribute to the later development of eating disorders. It's not at all surprising that the source of the most powerful words are family members. Parents, we live in a world that places a premium on beauty and fitness. The same culture that pressures our kids is the culture that pressures us into unhealthy and imbalanced priorities and practices of our own. How we live those out and how we talk to our kids about their own bodies has the potential to do either great good, or great harm. How are you living and talking in front of your kids? Are you helping them to be healthy, but also to be balanced in their view of what they see in the mirror?

## TRENDS: PARENTS PROVIDING ALCOHOL

It's mind-boggling to think just how little common-sense some parents have when it comes to raising children and teens. For example, some parents believe that in order to teach their children responsible drinking habits, they should give their teens an occasional taste of alcohol. But well-intentioned actions don't always result in the desired outcome. In fact, research from Australia is showing that there is no rationale for giving alcohol to adolescents younger than the legal purchase age. Richard Mattick of Australia's National Drug and Alcohol Research Center says, "To reduce the risk of alcohol-related harm, parents should avoid supplying alcohol to children." Of course, there are moral and legal issues associated with the practice as well. Parents, your responsibility is to lead your children into a lifestyle that brings honor and glory to God. Teach a biblical view on alcohol. Work to prevent alcohol and drug abuse in your family. Build borders and boundaries around your kids.



## LATEST RESEARCH: PARENTING STYLES

Research from Barna identifies three approaches to parenting being utilized today. Parenting by default is what Barna calls the path of least resistance. In this approach, parents do whatever comes naturally as influenced by cultural norms and traditions. The objective is to keep everyone happy without allowing parenting to dominate other aspects of the parent's life. The second approach is trial and error parenting. In this approach, parents see themselves as amateurs, believe that there are no guidelines to follow, and you just set out to do your best. The third and least common approach is revolutionary parenting. These parents take God's word on life and family at face value, and apply those words faithfully and consistently.

Barna's research shows that revolutionary parenting results in deep and real faith-based transformation in the lives of children. Parents, how are you parenting your child?

**SEXUAL INTEGRITY  
INITIATIVE**  
A resource of CPYU and Project Six19

**3 Thoughts on  
Sexual Integrity**  
by Jason Soucinek

Here are three things to consider as you engage the subject of sexual integrity with your son, daughter, or student.

**First, it's not about saying NO.** Often when we talk about abstinence, sexual purity, or sexual integrity, we are training our youth to speak in the negative. However, as a Christian, choosing to wait should not be a primary decision, but a secondary one. It should come out of our desire to say YES to following Christ, which means saying YES to scripture, which leads to a particular way of living.

**Second, be clear with your values.** Sometimes we think we've clearly spoken what we believe only to find we haven't. Or, and this is common, we just expect our kids to know what we believe. However, if I've never spoken my expectations then how can I ask for those things to happen? Often our biggest disappointments come from unmet expectations. Therefore, be sure to share yours with your son, daughter, or student. Then make sure your life also reflects the expectations that you are holding others to.

**Finally, where we find our identity is where we will find our choices.** When our identity is cemented in something or someone our choice will pour out from that one source and others will notice. When we are speaking to our sons, daughters, and students, Jesus Christ should be the one place, one choice, one relationship we need to be pointing to. Identity can be found in so many things in our culture but none are as powerful as the transforming power of Christ.

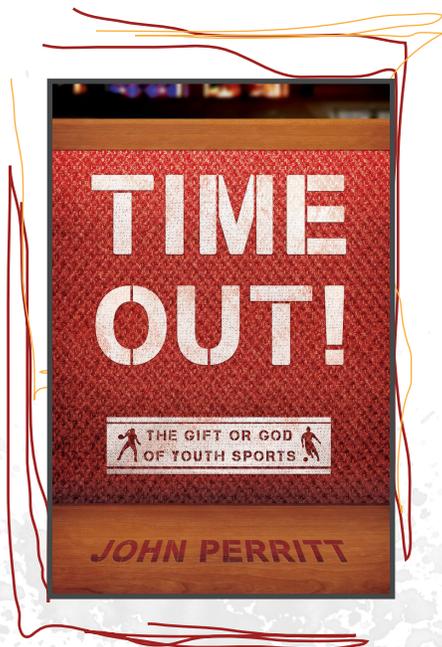
## New Podcast

**Youth Culture Matters** is a long-format podcast from CPYU co-hosted by Walt Mueller and Jason Soucinek.



Listen at  
[www.cpyu.org/podcast](http://www.cpyu.org/podcast).

Be sure to check out Episode 66 for an interview with John Perritt about youth, sports and ministry. Learn more about his book featured below.



## FROM THE WORD

As a parent of teens, you're no doubt aware of the many competing voices that exist in today's world, summoning our kids' allegiance. They cry out with a compelling ability to convince, encouraging kids to "Come and follow, come and follow, come and follow." All too often, our kids choose to follow voices other than the voice of the Savior.

Matthew 5-7 contains the words of Jesus known as The Sermon on the Mount. It is here that we find the most concise description of who Jesus wants his followers to be and what he wants them to do. As he brings his Sermon on the Mount to a conclusion, he utters words about hearing *and* doing. Jesus illustrates the difference between obedient and disobedient listeners through the parable of the two builders.

Those who choose not to heed Jesus' words by hearing *and* doing are likened to fools who are so ready to get on with life that they fail to dig deep and build a strong foundation. Those who heed Jesus' words to hear *and* do are wise, building their lives on a strong and secure foundation.

We know what comes next. Even though the houses look the same from the ground up, the weakness of one and the strength of the other are quickly exposed when the inevitable storms of life hit.

What kind of foundation sits at the base of your life? Your kids are watching. God is using the foundation they see in your life as the basis for the blueprint they will use, both now and into the future.

## HELPFUL RESOURCE ←

A case could be made that sport has become our #1 national obsession and diversion. From U5 to the pros, and from the field to the sidelines, we have turned sport from a good thing into an ultimate thing. If Jesus Christ is truly the Lord of all of life, then it's necessary for us to follow Him into the sphere of sport... playing, parenting, and spectating to His glory. In *Time Out: The Gift or God of Youth Sports*, John Perritt offers thoughtful Gospel-grounded guidance for how to engage with God's good gift of play.

Sport is one of the many evidences of a gracious God. It can unite people, sharing together in the enjoyment it brings. But it brings the challenge of proper stewardship under God, especially when working with young people. Are they being encouraged to use their gifts and time to God's glory? Are you ensuring that they are living by God's Word, rather than prioritising their sport? There is a lot to learn about how God wants us to live through sports – both on and off the field.

**“THEREFORE EVERYONE WHO HEARS THESE WORDS OF MINE AND PUTS THEM INTO PRACTICE IS LIKE A WISE MAN WHO BUILT HIS HOUSE ON THE ROCK.”  
MATTHEW 7:24**

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