

YOUTH CULTURE  
HOT QUOTE

*“I think we should stop allowing ourselves to be shocked every year by the disconnect between impactful music and these awards and just accept that what once was the highest form of recognition may no longer matter to the artists that exist now and the ones that come after.”*

Drake, in an Instagram post, discussing the Grammys and certain artists he believes were snubbed of nominations, and wondering if something new should be started, November 2020.



## NEW YEAR - NEW BODY

WALT MUELLER, CPYU President



Don't like what you see in the mirror? You're not alone. It's not surprising that the top two New Year's resolutions have everything to do with what we see in the mirror: exercise more, and lose weight. While it is important that we teach our kids to take care of their God-given bodies, they are growing up in a culture where we are obsessed with our outward appearances. Our obsession is less a matter of balanced stewardship, and more a matter of all-consuming idolatry. What we look like has become the foundation on which so many build their identity. I recently read that as of 2017, the "wellness" industry was a \$4.2 trillion market, which was up from \$3.7 trillion in 2015.

While these messages educate our kids from the moment they emerge from the womb, the time when these messages exercise their greatest persuasive power is when our kids hit puberty. . . which in today's world starts for many when they are still in elementary school.

Do you remember what it was you were feeling and experiencing when your body was transitioning from childhood to adulthood with what seemed like breakneck speed? It happened for me during my Junior High years and I was consumed with two questions: What is happening to me? And, what do I do with what is happening to me? I can't imagine what it's like to navigate puberty in today's world. Television, film, and social media is pounding them with thousands of images and messages daily, each one contributing to a set of appearance standards that become the benchmark for being normal, acceptable, likeable, and lovable. Parents can and must help kids navigate this confusing new transition of rapid physical growth by playing the following roles:

**Be sensitive and affirming as your teen's body changes.** Our children need parents who will openly explain and discuss what is happening to their bodies. Most of these changes occur during the middle school years, when group acceptance is of

the utmost importance and when peers – because of their own impulsivity and insecurities – tend to be most cruel and insensitive. A loving and sensitive parent can serve as a buffer in the midst of the type of ridicule that could scar a child's self-image for life. While dealing with these pressures will still be difficult for your child, your positive input will serve to build resiliency into your teen.

**Offer your teen a godly perspective on the changes that are taking place.** In addition to modeling the unconditional love and acceptance of Christ during the physically awkward years, Mom and Dad should temper the social pressure to be preoccupied with outward appearance. Take the time to teach your children about the inward qualities of godliness. Be sure you provide an example void of obsession over your own appearance. It's important to be about the business of developing your own inward character in a Godly direction. You too, are who you are, not what you look like.

**Understand the sexual temptation your teen faces.** In centuries past, when puberty arrived at a later age and marriages took place when children were younger, pre-marital sexual temptation was present but not as intense. Kids were able to answer the pressure with some resilience thanks to a commonly-held understanding of sexual parameters, right and wrong, and the expectations of society-at-large. The ever-widening gap between sexual maturity and age of marriage has made it difficult for our kids. We must live and promote a biblical sexual ethic so that they might experience the God-given gift of sexuality in all of its glorious and enjoyable fullness, in the context of a monogamous, life-long, heterosexual marriage.

Ongoing open communication with your kids about their new bodies will not only temper the culture's message with Scriptural truth, but it will strengthen your relationship with your child.★

## Teen Shows Released in 2020

*Ranked According to IMDb*



1. *Julie and the Phantoms*
2. *Love, Victor*
3. *Never Have I Ever*
4. *Teenage Bounty Hunters*
5. *Outer Banks*
6. *I Am Not Okay With This*
7. *Everything's Gonna Be Okay*
8. *We Are Who We Are*
9. *Control Z*
10. *Diary of a Future President*



### QUICK STATS

34% of 11-21 year-old females won't post a photo of themselves online without using a filter or app to enhance it first.

*(Girlguiding Girl's Attitude survey)*

94% of American parents are concerned about "summer slide" or learning loss as the result of COVID-related disruptions to the previous school year.

*(OnePoll)*

### FROM THE NEWS:

## NOT EATING BREAKFAST

Because Jesus Christ is Lord over all of life, our faith does have something to say about how we treat and care for our bodies. Our physical selves need to be taken care of and stewarded as an act of worship. On a practical level, we need to be teaching our kids to not worship their bodies, but to care for them through proper diet and exercise. The recently released *Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey* from the CDC is reporting a trend that we as parents should be addressing. Almost 17% of the middle school and high school students surveyed report that they had not eaten breakfast on all seven days during the seven days before the survey. The CDC warns that this trend is on the increase. In fact, it is up from 13% back in 2011. Dietary experts tell us that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, as it kickstarts and fuels our systems. Teach your kids that a healthy body is one that serves them well as they endeavor to serve the Lord throughout the day.



TRENDS:  
PHLUID PROJECT

If you go online and look for the Phluid Project you will gain a glimpse not only into our culture's rapidly changing views on sexuality and gender, but on how those views are reshaping styles and shopping. The Phluid Project was launched just under three years ago as a gender free fashion brand. But it's not just about clothing that can be worn by both men or women. In fact, that brand exists to sidestep and even deny the gender binaries of male and female. The brand's website says that they are a part of a movement to challenge the ethos of traditions past that inhibit freedom and self expression. The site reads, "the rising voice of today's youth reject gender binaries and desire an all-encompassing space, both physically and virtually, that allow us to wear what makes us feel good and express ourselves with freedom and authenticity." Parents, teach your kids that true gender freedom comes through living into the binaries we've been gifted by our good God.



## LATEST RESEARCH:

## THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHERS

One of the beautiful realities of life as a human being is that we have been made by God for relationships. Our own personal experience tells us that when we are in healthy relationships we flourish. But when our relationships are strained, difficult, unhealthy, and even broken, our well-being is undermined. Bad relationships take a toll. We shouldn't be surprised that new research is telling us that teenagers who have strong relationships with their teachers have better overall mental and physical health outcomes in adulthood. The study collected data on 20,000 American students, tracking them from seventh grade into early adulthood. This research should spur us to support our teachers, providing them with training opportunities for learning how to better connect with students. In addition, we should be praying for our teachers as they have to navigate so many difficult issues in today's world. And teachers, realize the powerful life-shaping role you serve in your student's lives.

COLLEGE  
TRANSITION  
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a resource of CPYU

www.CollegeTransitionInitiative.com

Sex, Screens,  
and The  
College  
Student

by Walt Mueller



If I had seen the title of the journal article 20 years ago, I would have been left scratching my head: *Online Sexual Activity Experiences Among College Students: A Four-Country Comparison*. But with smartphones and 24/7 internet access almost completely universal among college students, a study like this is definitely warranted.

The study compared male and female college students from four countries (U.S., Canada, Sweden, and Germany) regarding the type, prevalence, and frequency of their online sexual activities. Most participants reported experience with accessing sexual information (89.8%) and sexual entertainment (76.5%) online. Almost half (48.5%) reported browsing for sexual products, and a substantial minority reported having engaged in cybersex (30.8%).

The reality is that since the university years are a time for concentrated in-depth learning and worldview formation, what one learns in college is likely to stick for life. Beliefs are cemented which then yield behaviors. Parents and youth workers must diligently work to prepare their children for the post-high school years, instilling in them a biblically-based sexual worldview that will lead them to choose wisely as they leave home and launch into adulthood. Teach your kids that sex and sexuality are good gifts of God, given to be experienced within the context of a heterosexual monogamous marriage.

## 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 120** titled  
“Redeeming Power” with  
**Dr. Diane Langberg**

## FROM THE WORD

As we begin another new year, you most likely have high hopes for the next twelve months. We all desire to put aside, forget, and move on from the difficult realities of life we’ve faced during 2020! That’s not at all unusual. In fact, this desire for things to be right actually points to the fact that we were made for something better. That “something better” is what existed when God created our first parents and placed them in the Garden. Things were the way they were supposed to be. No pain. No heartache. No sickness. No tears. No death. Isn’t that really what we hope for at the beginning of every new year?

**“BEHOLD, I AM  
MAKING ALL  
THINGS NEW.”**

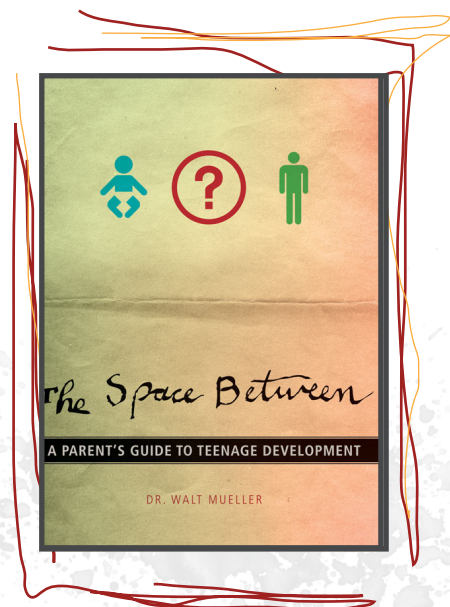
**REVELATION 21:5 (ESV)**

The truth is that for those who are committed followers of Jesus Christ, this reality that we all long for *will* one day be realized. In Revelation 21:5, God pulls back the curtain on our future and tells us to “Behold, I am making all things new” (ESV). We are told that we can look forward to a new heaven and a new earth where things will be the way they are supposed to be. No more pain, heartache, sickness, tears, or death! There won’t be any of the brokenness and suffering we are sure to once again experience during this coming year.

Your longing points to the fact that you were made to be in a relationship with God. Follow Jesus and hope will be yours. As God helps you navigate anything difficult that might come your way in 2021, rest assured that there is a day coming when “gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away” (Isaiah 35:10).

## HELPFUL RESOURCE ←

The changes of adolescence, while normal for every teen, feel completely abnormal to parents of teenagers, often leaving you feeling like a helpless bystander. But you’re not alone and there is hope to help you (and your teen) get through these challenging, changing years. In *The Space Between: A Parent’s Guide to Teenage Development*, Dr. Walt Mueller brings wisdom from research and his own experience to help other parents through the tumultuous years of adolescence. With empathy and practical tools, this book will help you understand the changes your teen is experiencing, and help you effectively parent them and create a parent-teen relationship that helps your teen (and you) get through these change-filled years successfully.



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