

## The New Moral MA+H

WALT MUELLER, CPYU President



### YOUTH CULTURE HOT QUOTE

*“My goal in life isn’t to please people anymore. I think if you’re likable, sometimes you are like milquetoast. You don’t necessarily stand for anything. You don’t rub people the wrong way because you [don’t] have strong opinions, and honestly, I think if you’re just likable, you’re not very interesting.”*

Katie Couric, who recently wrote a new memoir, *Going There*, in an interview with Terry Gross, speaking about her memoir, life, career, and likeability. *Fresh Air* on NPR, October 26, 2021.



In my recurring nightmare, it’s the Spring of 1974 and I’m a high school senior. It’s a few days before graduation and I’m between classes walking the hall. Suddenly, I come to the horrifying realization that I have totally forgotten all about my math final. . . which happens to be coming up in three minutes. I haven’t studied for the final, which in the interest of honest self-disclosure wouldn’t have helped me in the first place. Let’s just say that math wasn’t my strongest subject.

In my dream, those three minutes I have to pass between classes become an eternity during which I imagine all the ways that flunking this final will change my future, both immediate and long-term. My near future will require coming back for an additional senior year. Beyond that, I realize that failing this final is only the beginning to a lifetime of lost opportunities. Still, I’m hoping that I can guess well enough to get a passing grade. But as I head to class, I realize that I don’t have a pencil with which to take the test. . . which is a huge math no-no. Freaking out, I hightail it to my locker to grab a pencil, only to realize that I have forgotten my locker combination, which now that I think of it, relates to my lack of giftedness with numbers! I panic. And as I continue to spin my lock, I wake up. I don’t have to dig too deep to figure out why I keep having this nightmare. For me, my difficulty in navigating math continues to haunt me.

Math, perhaps the most logical, non-debatable, and organized of all school subjects, has in modern times become the Achilles heel of way too many parent-child relationships. I remember my dad

trying to tutor me while lamenting “the stupidity” of what at the time was labeled “The New Math.” Now, I’m watching as my kids get frustrated as they work to help their second-graders navigate the parent-stupefying “Common Core Math.” Perhaps it wouldn’t be at all surprising to have our kids come home from school to tell us that they learned that  $2+2=5$ . If that happened, even the most math-illiterate of us would be diligent about correcting them. We’d also be wise to put them in another school.

As the school of life catechizes our kids 24/7 in today’s world, we must continually seek to know what they are learning from the confusing new “moral math”. When we find that the cultural narrative has mis-educated them, we must offer diligently dispensed correctives rooted in the eternal Truth of God’s Word. This requires that we develop keen biblically based discernment resulting in truth-telling that may be mislabeled as “judgments”. And when such labeling occurs, we know that cultural catechization has been successfully taking place.

G.K. Chesterton reminds us of the courage it takes to lead truthfully in today’s world: “It is only the last and wildest kind of courage that can stand on the tower before ten thousand people and tell them that twice two is four.”

Parents need to muster up the courage to tell the truth to that 14-year-old sitting across the dinner table. The words of Joshua 1:9 ring true for us as we proclaim truth in today’s world: “Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”\*

TOP 10...

## Netflix Shows and Movies

On October 27, 2021  
Source:  
Netflix  
"Top 10 in the U.S. Today"



1. *You*
2. *Squid Game*
3. *Maid*
4. *Locke & Key*
5. *inside job*
6. *Riverdale*
7. *Maya and the Three*
8. *CoComelon*
9. *shameless*
10. *King Arthur: Legend of the Sword*



### QUICK STATS

In 1970, men accounted for 58% of students attending colleges and universities. As of spring 2021, women accounted for 59.5% of students attending colleges and universities nationwide.

(Institute for Family Studies/  
National Student Clearinghouse  
Research Center/Educational  
Policy Institute)

57% of Americans say their family gets together for meals more frequently than they did at the start of 2020, pre-pandemic.

(OnePoll)

### FROM THE NEWS:

## AMERICA'S DRINKING PROBLEM

A recent article in *Atlantic* magazine is titled, "America has a drinking problem." Those five words at the top of Kate Julian's overview of our nation's drinking culture and habits should cause us to wake up and pay attention. Among other things, Julian tells us that between 1997 and 2017, the number of alcohol-related deaths in the United States doubled, to more than 70,000 a year. Alcohol is now one of the leading drivers of the decrease in life expectancy. Julian notes that these numbers are sure to increase as a result of the pandemic, as during the pandemic the frequency of drinking rose, along with sales of hard liquor. Nearly a quarter of Americans said they'd been drinking more over the past year as a strategy for coping with their stress. We should be concerned about these trends. As Christian parents, our role is to lead our kids, by example and by our words, into learning that our culture glorifies and worships alcohol use, and that drunkenness is wrong.

TRENDS:  
FAST FOOD

Did you know that more than one in three kids eats fast food on any given day in the United States? One of the reasons for the popularity of fast food among our kids is the successful fast food marketing campaigns targeting impressionable young people. In 2019, kids between the ages of 2 and 17 saw an average of roughly two fast food TV ads per day. Only one percent of those ads promoted healthy menu choices. The other 99% promoted the full calorie meal options, or the restaurant chain in general. Researchers found that fast food ad spending targeting black and Hispanic youth increased at the greatest rate. These groups already are at a higher risk for obesity and diet-related diseases. Experts are calling on parents and advertisers to support raising healthy children, especially in this day and age of childhood obesity. Parents, let's work to teach our kids to make healthy diet choices as a way to honor the Lord by caring for their bodies.



## LATEST RESEARCH:

PARENTING PRACTICES THAT  
FACILITATE SPIRITUAL NURTURE

The Book of Proverbs reminds parents that we are to train up our children in the way they should go. As we read the Scriptures, we

realize that the way they should go is in the life of discipleship. Recently, the folks at Lifeway research looked to discover the parenting practices present in families where children grew up to maintain their faith between the ages of 18 and 30. In other words, what are the factors that positively affect the moral and spiritual development of our kids? The research indicates that children who grow up to remain faithful followers of Jesus Christ grew up in homes where the

following practices were present. First was regular Bible reading. Second was engaging in prayer. Third was integration into the life of the church beyond just regular attendance. Families and their children were involved in service opportunities. And finally, these children listened to and sang songs about the faith. Parents, are these practices present in your home?

CPYU'S  
DIGITAL  
KIDS  
INITIATIVETikTok and  
Vaping

by Walt Mueller



Because of where they're at in the developmental stage, our children and teens are extremely vulnerable to culture's messages as they are engaged in the process of identity formation and worldview formation. These are the formative years where decisions are made regarding the beliefs and behaviors they will adopt for the rest of their lives. Because of this, social media and peer influence are strong formative forces. And in today's world, the social media platform TikTok is a powerful influencer of kids.

Researchers who have been looking at TikTok's video content are sounding a warning that videos are influencing beliefs and behaviors regarding vaping. With a third of U.S. Tiktok users being younger than 14 years old, we should be concerned that the survey found that positive portrayals of e-cigarette use were viewed over 1.1 billion times, including instructional videos showing vaping tricks. Monitor your kids online time, and tell them the truth about substance abuse.

## New Podcast

**The Word in Youth Ministry**  
is a podcast from CPYU  
for youth workers by youth  
workers.



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

Be sure to check out  
**Episode 13**  
**"Trusting the Bible"**



## FROM THE WORD

Solomon has just become the king. God comes to Solomon and says to him, "Ask what I shall give you." Solomon answers with two requests: he asks God for *wisdom* and for *knowledge*. God's response to Solomon's request gives us a clear picture of what God would have us ask for as we lead our children: "Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked for possessions, wealth, honor, or the life of those who hate you, and have not even asked for long life, but have asked for wisdom and knowledge for yourself that you may govern my people over whom I have made you king, wisdom and knowledge are granted to you" (2 Chronicles 1:11&12).

Solomon's request for *wisdom* recognizes that God is the source of all wisdom. This kind of wisdom is marked by spiritual insight and moral discernment. It comes to us as we trust in God and his Word as the source of knowing God's will and way for our lives and for the lives

of our kids. *Knowledge* also represents God as the source of that which leads us to discern between good and evil. In today's world, Godly wisdom and knowledge might be the two most important tools in our parenting toolbox that we are continually seeking, sharpening, and employing as we raise our kids.

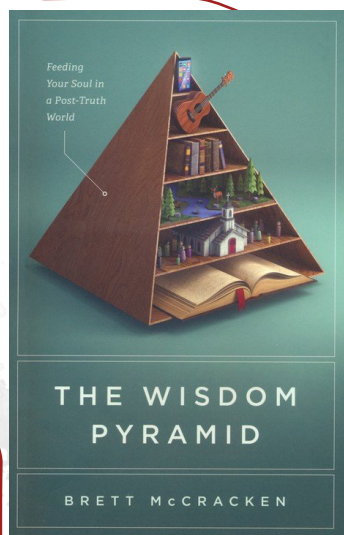
These days, our culture dictates so many different desires that we think we should have for our kids. Don't listen to the cultural narrative. Rather, seek first wisdom and knowledge, not only so that you will know the way, but that you will be able to lead your kids in God's direction for their lives.

**"GIVE ME NOW WISDOM  
AND KNOWLEDGE..."**  
**2 CHRONICLES 1:10a**

## HELPFUL RESOURCE ←

We're facing an information overload. With the quick tap of a finger we can access an endless stream of addictive information—sports scores, breaking news, political opinions, streaming TV, the latest Instagram posts, and much more. Accessing information has never been easier—but acquiring wisdom is increasingly difficult.

In an effort to help us consume a more balanced, healthy diet of information, Brett McCracken has created the "Wisdom Pyramid." Inspired by the food pyramid model, *The Wisdom Pyramid: Feeding Your Soul in a Post-Truth World* challenges us to increase our intake of enduring, trustworthy sources (like the Bible) while moderating our consumption of less reliable sources (like the Internet and social media). At a time when so much of our daily media diet is toxic and making us spiritually sick, *The Wisdom Pyramid* suggests that we become healthy and wise when we reorient our lives around God—the foundation of truth and the eternal source of wisdom.



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