

"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."
- John 8:31&32 (NIV)

10 BEST HIGH SCHOOL MOVIES SINCE 1987
(SOURCE: *Chicago Tribune*, September 2009)

1. **Dazed and Confused**
2. **Election**
3. **Raising Victor Vargas**
4. **Hoop Dreams**
5. **Mean Girls**
6. **Superbad**
7. **The Class**
8. **Bring It On**
9. **The Virgin Suicides**
10. **Heathers**

YOUTH CULTURE HOT QUOTE

"When I was younger, my mother communicated with ghosts. She and my dad would invite friends over to use a Ouija board and talk with spirits. I was allowed to watch. I imagine my interest in the unknown started then."

- Matt Bellamy, lead vocalist and guitarist of the band Muse, *Spin*, September 2009

WHATEVER FEELINGS

BY WALT MUELLER, PRESIDENT, CPYU

Marketers tell us lots about our world. Not only do their carefully constructed advertisements influence behavior by selling products, but if we look at ads carefully we can see reflected back to us who we are and what we believe as a culture. That's particularly true of the marketing efforts that target children, teens, and young adults.

Take for example Lucky Strike cigarettes, a brand that's been around for over a hundred years. When my grandfather was young, the brand was marketed with the same slogan that's being used today: "Lucky Strike Means Fine Tobacco." But as our culture has shifted, Lucky Strike's ads have shifted to reflect the changes that have taken place in culture. For my grandfather's generation and the next two that followed, Lucky Strike's advertisers appealed to the mind, thinking, "When faced with a choice of what cigarette to purchase and smoke, smokers will choose our better tobacco."

Fast-forward to today's world. A recent ad for the brand featured only the foil top of a Lucky Strike pack set against a dark background. Stamped on the foil are the initials "L.S./M.F.T." All that's left of the slogan are its initials, leaving uninformed readers to wonder, *What do these initials mean?* However, readers don't

have to wonder long. Featured prominently beneath the foil top near the center of the ad is the question, "What does it mean to you?" In other words, it means whatever the reader *feels* it should mean.

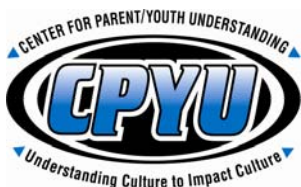
This subtle and often-overlooked 100-year shift is something we as parents must understand and address. Our kids are growing up in a world which believes that objective, universally held standards of truth and morality are passé. The way to live - they are told, is to make decisions based on how they *feel* and what works for them. Feelings have eclipsed rationality and experience has eclipsed truth in today's world. The challenges this brings to the Christian faith are very, very real.

What does that mean for you as you parent your kids? It should raise your awareness of your need to counter these dangerous trends by taking every opportunity to consciously model and talk about the fact that God's Word is true, and that He has given us His word as an unchanging standard of truth that is not only to be trusted, but lived. Living as a slave to the truth of Christ rather than as a slave to the opinions of one's self is not only liberating, but something that when experienced is absolutely amazing.

CPYU TREND ALERT: MTV VMAs

While the dust has mostly settled from last month's eventful MTV Video Music Award's show, there are some great lessons we can teach our kids by processing the behavior of pop star Kanye West. If you're one of the few who missed it, West jumped on stage and stole the microphone from nineteen-year-old Taylor Swift as she began her acceptance speech after receiving the award for "Best Female Video." The relatively humble and naïve Swift was stunned and speechless as West protested Swift's win by suggesting that the award should have gone to Beyonce.

West's behavior offers our kids a great example of the decline in civility and what not to do. But there are two other lessons that can be learned from what happened later. When Beyonce won her award for "Video of the Year," she called Swift onstage and invited her to give her speech. It was a great example of humility. And whether under pressure or not, West later admitted his rudeness and apologized. Let's pray that our kids find and follow positive role models.



LATEST RESEARCH: DATING, SEX AND VIOLENCE

A recent study from Britain's Bristol University reports that one in three teenage girls has suffered sexual abuse from a boyfriend, and one in four has experienced violence in a relationship.

The girls who had experienced violence report being punched, slapped, or beaten by their boyfriends. One in six girls had been pressured into having sex, and one out of every sixteen claimed to have been raped. Others said they had been pressured or forced to kiss or intimately touch their boyfriends.

A comment from one girl in the study offers sad insight into the realities of dating relationships in today's world. She says, "I only went out with him for a week. And then, because I didn't want to have sex, he just started picking on me and hitting me."

Parents, let me remind you that reality demands a response. We must teach our kids about what it means to honor and glorify God by understanding and experiencing their sexuality according to His will and way.



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FROM THE WORD

What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus Christ? In today's feeling-oriented world, a growing number of people develop an answer to that question based on their own personal opinions (what works for *me*), rather than on the parameters and definitions established by the One who has issued the invitation to "come and follow me."

In John 8:31&32, Jesus makes it clear that those who hold to his teaching are "really my disciples." What he's saying is that we must embark on a mission to know His word. We must welcome it and live in it so much that it takes center stage in our lives.

Since Jesus is the Word himself, what he is calling us to is a life of listening and following.

As a parent, one of the greatest gifts you can give to your teenager is exclusive and intense reliance on Jesus Christ - not anyone (including yourself) or anything else. It is in knowing and living this reality that we find true freedom. Then, we must prayerfully trust that through our example, Jesus will open the eyes of our kids to see their need to do the same.

IN THE NEWS: KIDS, DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Parents and school administrators in Benicia, California learned a lot at a recent substance abuse forum sponsored by the local school district. A panel of four students opened up about what's really happening with kids, drugs, and alcohol in the Benicia community. High school junior Natalie Peterson told parents that if kids really want to find it, "it's easy to find."

In the candid conversation, parents learned that middle school students are choosing to smoke because they are stressed out. They learned that

students are bringing water bottles to school that they've filled with alcohol from the family liquor cabinet. And, the panelists shared how many of their peers use fake IDs to get alcohol, something that's easy to do since many local store owners don't even ask for identification.

The Benicia forum serves to remind us of our need to stay in communication with our kids, ask them the difficult questions, and set high standards and expectations regarding the illegal and immoral abuse of alcohol and drugs.

