

CPYU PARENT PAGE

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"For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day."
- 1 Corinthians 15:3&4 (NIV)

PREVENTING DEPRESSION

BY WALT MUELLER

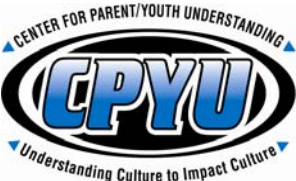
TOP 10 SONGS ON THE RADIO TOP 40 CATEGORY (SOURCE: *Radio and Records*, issue date 3/27/2009)

1. **Gives You Hell - All-American Rejects**
2. **Right Round - Flo Rida**
3. **My Life Would Suck Without You - Kelly Clarkson**
4. **Poker Face - Lady GaGa**
5. **Circus - Britney Spears**
6. **Dead and Gone - T.I. w/ Justin Timberlake**
7. **You Found Me - The Fray**
8. **Sober - Pink**
9. **Heartless - Kanye West**
10. **Just Dance - Lady GaGa w/ Colby O'Donis**

YOUTH CULTURE HOT QUOTE

"It's the way you carry yourself, the way you walk, and how you project yourself. Self-confidence is the single most attractive quality a girl can possess."

- Gucci Creative Director Frida Giannini, *Teen Vogue*, April 2009, pg. 101



While the facts about teenage depression are discouraging, the reality is that most adolescents make it through the difficult teenage years relatively well-adjusted when it comes to their emotions. Over the years, my curiosity has led me to families in a personal quest to discover the powerful *preventive* role parents play in thwarting adolescent depression. My simple and straightforward question has been this: "In a world where the number of your teenagers feeling and being depressed is growing, what are parents doing to help kids move and grow through their teenage years in an emotionally healthy way?" Their insightful answers are many, but let me highlight just three that should be viewed as wonderful gifts we can give to our teens to prevent depression and to promote emotional health.

First, we must do our best to create a stable family environment. While most teens will find themselves feeling alone, rejected, and somewhat hopeless from time to time, those who suffer from depression say they feel alone, rejected, and hopeless *at home*. Those who are most vulnerable report being abused, having parents with alcohol or drug problems, or say they have a home life characterized by arguing, discord, disruptions, separation, fatherlessness, or divorce. We must remember that God created and intended the family to be the place where each of us can find unconditional love, mutual caring, and intimacy. It's the place where we should be able to be

ourselves without fearing rejection. If our families are characterized by love and stability, emotional suffering is less likely to occur.

Second, we must lead our children to spiritual maturity. One of the awesome tasks of parenting is the job of serving as signposts. Parents are to point their children, by precept and example, to the God of the universe. There is nothing that can replace the hope that comes from a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ as a stabilizing influence in the life of your teenager. As you live out a life characterized by faith in God, you will become a stable rock and point of reference for your kids as they travel the oftentimes difficult road of adolescence.

And third, we must model and teach a biblical theology of pain and suffering. We live in a feeling-oriented society where we grow up learning to avoid pain and pursue pleasure. Because we don't like to suffer, we tend to get down and depressed when things get difficult. We can help our teens through adolescence by letting them know that pain and suffering are a part of life, that pain and suffering are temporary, and that God gives us the gift of pain and suffering as a way to glorify himself in us and through us.

In a day and age where depression is becoming more and more common among the young, prevention is still the best medicine. As parents, we are the ones appointed by our heavenly Father to dispense the preventive prescription on a daily basis. Will we?

CPYU TREND ALERT: GIRLS AND PORNOGRAPHY

In today's world, we can't talk enough about the pervasiveness and dangers of pornography. Long gone are the days when the only way to find pornography was to go looking for it. Today, the Internet and other digital technologies have created a world where if our kids don't find pornography, it will find them. In addition, pornography is not just a guy thing anymore. A recent study found that ninety percent of our boys ages thirteen to fourteen have accessed sexual content online at least once.

What about the girls? You may be sadly surprised to learn that seventy percent of our thirteen to fourteen year old girls have done the same. In today's world, the pornography they see might be the nude or semi-nude pictures of friends that get passed around quickly through emails and text messages. Pornography is a horribly twisted and fallen expression of the wonderful God-given gift of our sexuality. Parents, talk to your kids about how pornography seeks to destroy their lives.

LATEST RESEARCH: VOLUNTEERING

Could it be that it's time for us as parents to observe and follow the example of our teens? In a recent Harris Interactive Survey commissioned by the Christian relief ministry World Vision, researchers found that more teens are now volunteering to support a charitable cause than have part-time jobs. While only thirty-nine percent of our teens have part-time jobs, fifty-six percent of today's teenagers are volunteering to support a charitable cause. Parents report that eighty-two percent of the teens in

their lives are now doing something to support charities. They are volunteering, recruiting others, wearing buttons and t-shirts, and donating money. We should be encouraged by the fact that our kids are following God's call to do justice, show kindness, and be merciful to others. Not only that, but we should encourage them by our own example to not only continue in these efforts, but to be even more generous with their time and resources. And, we should be doing the same ourselves.



FROM THE WORD

This month we celebrate several days that changed history. Known in most Christian circles as Holy Week, this is the time when we remember the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Passing the message of the centrality of the Cross on to our children and teens is – as the Apostle Paul has written – “of first importance” (I Cor. 15:3).

Sadly, too many of us and too many of our kids grow up believing that somehow, some way, we must earn our salvation by winning God's approval. We seek to earn forgiveness from God and acceptance by God through our actions, achievements, and obedience to God's commands. This is legalism - and it is not at all biblical or true.

The fact of the matter – that we must embrace and pass on to our kids – is that we are reconciled to God *not* by our own actions or efforts, but through Jesus Christ and His sacrificial death on the cross. It is through His grace that we are forgiven and made new.

As your family gathers to celebrate Easter, be sure to focus on the cross. Talk about the events of the weekend, the meaning of the cross, the necessity of living every minute, nook, and cranny of our lives in thankful obedience to the God who became one of us so that we might once again be His.

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IN THE NEWS: ROLE MODELS

Heroes and role models are very important to our kids. Because they are impressionable, our children and teens need to look up to people who provide good models for living to the honor and glory of God, especially in today's morally confusing world.

In recent weeks, the antics of two high-profile role models from the world of sports have occasioned a wonderful opportunity for us to not only talk about the heroes we choose, but other moral and ethical issues.

Swimmer Michael Phelps got caught again, this time in an incident with marijuana. And baseball slugger Alex Rodriguez admitted to steroid abuse. Our kids need to learn that it does matter who we look up to. They need to be taught to make good role model choices.

We must discuss the failures of role models and seize teachable moments to teach our kids to make choices that reflect a commitment to God's will and way. Ultimately, our kids look to us. And it's our modeling that leaves the deepest impression.

