



A NEW YEAR - WHAT NOW?

Did you watch it last month? It might be my favorite all-time Christmas TV tradition. When I watched it early in December, I was moved as I always am by little Linus reciting the Christmas Story. It comes at that moment in *A Charlie Brown Christmas* where Charlie cries out, “Isn’t there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about!?” That’s when Linus takes the stage and recites those familiar words from Luke’s Gospel, including the proclamation of the angel of the Lord: “For unto you is born this day in the city of David, A Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11).

Perhaps you, like me, attended a Christmas Eve service that ended with the lights lowered, candles lit, and everyone singing “Silent Night.” I don’t know what that traditional carol brings to mind for you, but for me it serves as another reminder of the place which that “Holy infant so tender and mild” desires to hold in my life. There are two words in that song which capture, just as Linus recites, the reality of who He is: *Savior* and *Lord*.

On the one hand, He has come so “that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life” (John 3:16). But the role Jesus plays

in our lives is not to stop there. A raised hand, a walk forward, or the recitation of a “sinner’s prayer” is just a beginning. What follows for those who begin with the Savior is the beginning of a lifetime of following Him as Lord.

I’ve found that celebrating the New Year is a perfect time to reflect on the grace of God shown in sending the Savior. Reflecting on that should prompt great gratitude. I’ve also found the New Year to be a time to evaluate how my life has been and has not been lived in grateful submission to His lordship over the course of my life.

During December, I read some words from theologian John Stott that I trust will help you as you consider not only what it means to live your life under the lordship of Jesus Christ, but what it means to nurture and teach your kids during this New Year – 2023 - into doing the same.

Stott says that seeing Jesus as Lord signifies a personal commitment to Him. He goes on to share six major implications of Christ’s lordship that we need to both pursue in our own lives, and teach to our kids.

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YOUTH CULTURE

HOT QUOTE

Hugh Jackman, talking about mental health issues and how he hopes his new movie *The Son* will help spark conversations around the subject.

“There is a real lack of knowledge and ignorance and shame around the subject [of mental health] and I think it’s something we need to confront, really, really quickly.”



BBC Interview
December 20, 2022.

“THERE IS NOT A SQUARE INCH IN THE WHOLE DOMAIN OF OUR HUMAN EXISTENCE OVER WHICH CHRIST, WHO IS SOVEREIGN OVER ALL, DOES NOT CRY, ‘MINE!’”



Abraham Kuyper

First, we need to submit our minds to the lordship of Jesus Christ. You see, our minds are the inner citadels that control our actions. Stott says that “as we think, so we are.” Jesus Christ is to be our teacher. He forms our minds as we spend time in God’s Word. He is our authority and we should submit our thoughts to the truths of the Bible.

Second, we need to submit our wills to the lordship of Jesus Christ. It is not only what we believe that is to come under the lordship of Jesus, but also how we behave. Stott writes, “Discipleship implies obedience, and obedience implies that there are absolute moral commands that we are required to obey.”

Third, we need to submit our vocations to the lordship of Jesus Christ. We love and serve Jesus if we give ourselves to developing our God-given gifts and abilities in ways that lead us to use them to His glory. . . regardless of what we work at and where we work. In our work we are to give ourselves to the service of God and neighbor under Christ’s lordship.

Fourth, we need to submit our involvement in Christ’s body, the church, to the lordship of Jesus Christ. We don’t follow Jesus alone. Rather, we are each an integral part of the body of Christ over which He is the head. Together, we encourage each other, build each other up, and use our unique gifts to His service and glory.

Fifth, we need to submit our involvement in the world around us to the lordship of Jesus Christ. We are to remain obedient followers of Jesus as we live our lives in a larger world where His lordship is not recognized, and perhaps even scoffed at. God calls us to demonstrate to the world the true meaning of righteousness, love, freedom, justice, and compassion. We are called to be salt and light.

Sixth, we need to submit our passions and zeal to the lordship of Jesus Christ. Our zeal should be in tune with the command Jesus issued to His followers in all times and all places before His ascension: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20).

As we kick off a New Year, let’s commit to living our lives as dads and moms under the lordship of Jesus Christ. By doing so, we will provide our kids with a much-needed example of what it means to do the same. May our words and example reflect agreement with these challenging words of truth from Abraham Kuyper: “There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, ‘Mine!’”

WALT MUELLER
CPYU President



FROM THE NEWS

VIDEO GAME ADDICTION BY DESIGN

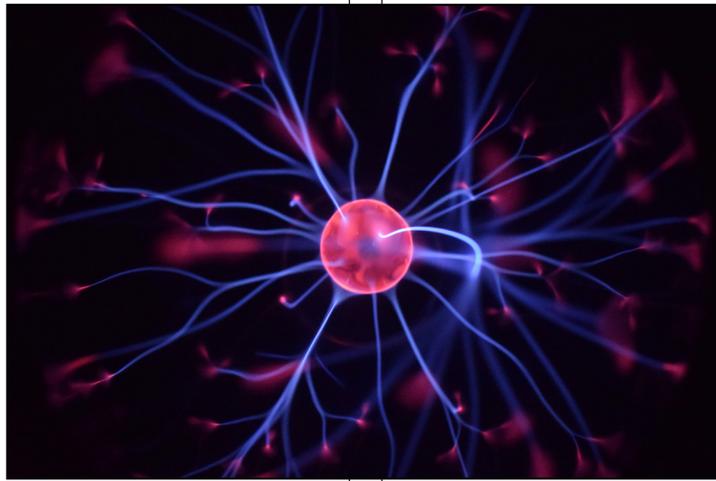
In a recent guest essay in the *New York Times*, mobile video gaming developer William Sui reported on steps China has taken to reduce gaming addiction among kids.

China has prohibited minors from playing video games on school days. China also legislated no more than an hour of video game playing on weekend and holiday nights. When kids then began flocking to livestreaming platforms to watch others play video games, China barred kids from watching livestreams after 10 PM. The Chinese government refers to video games as spiritual opium because of how they harm mental health and academic study. Sui, the developer of over 50 mobile games himself, went on to say that as a developer, he knows that game addiction is by design, for the simple reason that it meant success for his business. Sui says their ultimate goal was to build habit-forming games that have players coming back every day. Parents, our calling and goal is to keep our kids from addictions of all types.

TRENDS:

Digital Self-Harm

It's important that we pay special attention to any new trends that are sparked by the growing presence of smartphones and technology in today's youth culture. One new trend has been labeled as "digital self-harm", and it's on the rise among our teenagers. Listen carefully to this definition of digital self-harm: "it's a form of self-aggression that involves anonymously posting hurtful and sometimes verbally abusive remarks about one's self online." Kids will create anonymous social media accounts which they then use to post these comments targeted at themselves. Why, you may ask, are kids doing this? According to the *Journal of Adolescent Health*, teens are doing this as a mechanism to regulate and express their feelings of self-hatred and sadness, in addition to gaining attention from family and friends who will sympathize and reach out without knowing the real source of the comments. Parents, the God-shaped hole in our kids is growing, and it needs to be answered with the Gospel.



LATEST RESEARCH:

What the Pandemic Did to Kids' Brains

A recent study from Stanford University looked at and compared the brain structures of adolescents after the pandemic. What they found offers insights into what difficulty and stress can do to the human body, particularly the bodies of our developing children and teens. When compared with the assessments

done on teen brains prior to the pandemic, the teen brains assessed post-pandemic appeared to be several years older. In other words, the study suggests that pandemic related stressors physically-altered brain structures, making them appear as if they had aged. This kind of brain-age acceleration is typically seen only in the brains of children who have experienced chronic

adversity, such as neglect and family dysfunction. Parents, your children and teens are growing through a crucial period of life. We need to avoid piling on the pressure, and we need to point them to Jesus, who says, "Come to me all you who are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

QUICKSTATS

The number of calls to U.S. Poison Control Centers involving marijuana rose 245% among 6-18 year-olds between 2000 and 2020.

(Clinical Toxicology)

About 37% of teens surveyed reported poor mental health during 2020. At least 73% reported at least one Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs) during that time, and 12% experienced 3 or more. Around 20% of those who reported at least one ACE said they had felt actively suicidal during the past year. If they had experienced 4 or more ACEs, that percentage increased to around 55%.

(CDC)

III TOP III

10



MOST POPULAR ACTORS

1. Dwayne Johnson
2. Tom Holland
3. Johnny Depp
4. Robert Downey Jr.
5. Emma Watson
6. Chris Hemsworth
7. Samuel L. Jackson
8. Tom Hanks
9. Chris Evans
10. Scarlett Johansson

*According to Gen Z
Survey Conducted
Nov. 2 - 8, 2022
Source: Morning Consult*



GAINING WEIGHT

by WALT MUELLER

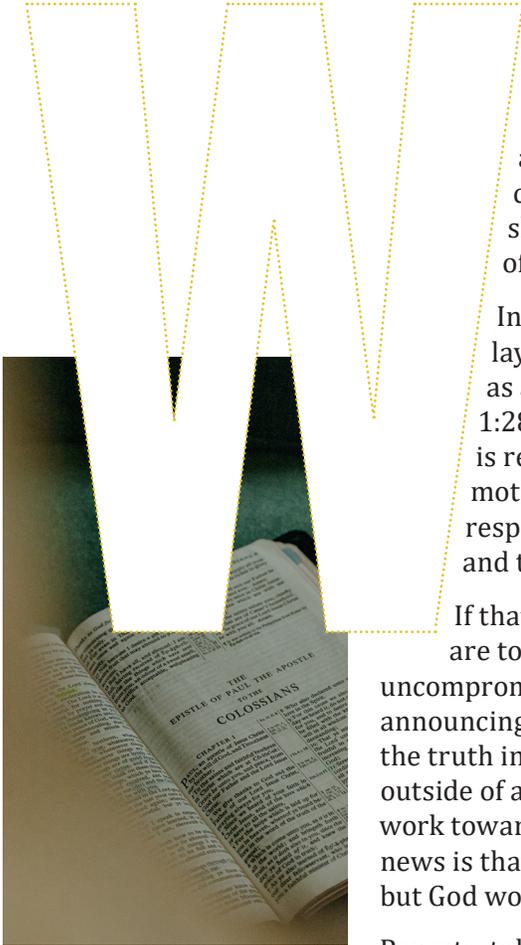
Parents, here's a challenge to adopt a New Year's resolution that has you bent on gaining weight. No, I'm not encouraging you to go against conventional New Year's resolutions and decide to eat more so that the scale in your home goes on overload. Rather, I'm encouraging you to resolve to weigh yourself down each and every day with the life-giving good weight of ingesting more and more of God's Word into your mind and heart.

As the great J.I. Packer once wrote, "Wisdom is divinely wrought in those, and those only, who apply themselves to God's revelation."

The Apostle Paul writes in Colossians 3:16, "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, with all wisdom."

What we need to do is soak ourselves in the Scriptures on a daily basis. As you do that, God will form and conform you more and more into His image. And, not only will you be changed, but you will be better equipped to nurture your children and teens in the faith through your words and your example.

FROM THE WORD



What is the goal of your parenting? The cultural parenting narrative might best be summed up in one word: “Success.” But what does success look like in parenting? Perhaps Ben Franklin’s old trio of “healthy, wealthy, and wise” might best summarize what contemporary “wisdom” tells us our kids should become. But is that what the trajectory of our parenting is intended to be?

In his letter to the Colossians, the Apostle Paul lays out a description of the role he played as an ambassador for the Gospel (Colossians 1:28-29). What he includes in that description is really a picture of Christian parenting, as mothers and fathers are those given the primary responsibility to raise and nurture their children and teens in the faith.

If that’s the case, what are the tasks we are to pursue with steadfast diligence and uncompromising hard work? We proclaim Christ by announcing that Jesus is Lord. We warn them by putting the truth in their minds and cautioning them about life outside of a relationship with Jesus Christ. We pray and work towards their spiritual maturity. And the good news is that we don’t do this through our own efforts, but God works in us and through us.

Parents, take some time to seriously evaluate your parenting goals. Ask the Lord to make clear not only the way to take, but to give you the strength to walk in that way.

“Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.”

Colossians 1:28-29

PODCAST



Youth Culture Matters

A CPYU PODCAST

Youth Culture Matters

is a long-format podcast from CPYU hosted by Walt Mueller.

BE SURE TO CHECK OUT EPISODE 162:

**“THEOLOGY OF THE BODY” WITH
TIMOTHY TENNENT**

LISTEN AT WWW.CPYU.ORG/PODCAST

“The more we understand the Old Testament story, the more we can rejoice in Christ together, since the biblical authors anticipated his advent. Their message of hope was not just for some parts of the world. News of a coming Savior should be spread as far and wide as the reach of sin and death.”

Mitchell L. Chase

HELPFUL
RESOURCES



BOOK

The whole Old Testament is the story of Jesus Christ, but it is so easy to limit ourselves to familiar verses, books, and passages, without ever understanding the full picture. We struggle to imagine where each book and prophecy and narrative fits into that grand story.

In the helpful guide, *Hope for All the Earth: Understanding the Story of the Old Testament*, Mitchell L. Chase takes us, step by step, through the whole sweep of the Old Testament, through its stories and songs, through its prophecies and promises, and shows us how each one points us to the coming Savior, and God’s plan to rescue us from our sin and establish his everlasting kingdom.