

BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION ON A FOUNDATION OF BIBLICAL TRUTH

*"We will tell the next generation
the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord." Psalm 78:4*

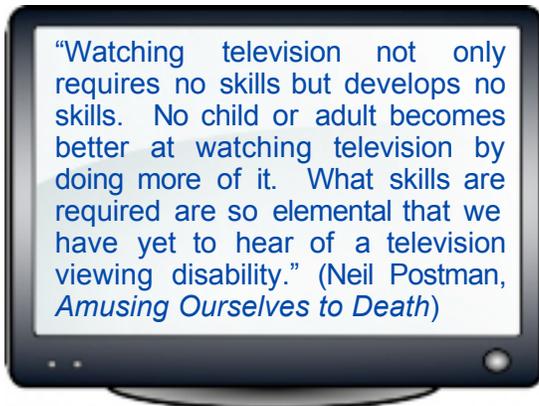


Greetings Parents!

Summer 2013

For our children summer is a break from the daily routine of school, clubs etc. and a time to relax and explore God's creation! Or is it? More and more our society seems to want to kidnap our children's spontaneous play time and overly regulate it into each moment being highly managed and overly control by adults. From every kind of camp experience imaginable to "children's mock-professional sports,"¹ what is being lost as this tendency descends upon our children? One study addressing this issue has coined the phrase "total institution" describing social organizations that provide highly regulated 24 hour per day control such as nursing homes, prisons, and boarding schools. "One discovery revealed that, regardless of particular purposes, all such organizations affect the people the same ways: they *stunt interpersonal growth, reduce levels of individual responsibility, and hinder opportunities to make personal choices.*"² No parent desires these character traits to be the outcome of their child rearing endeavors.

This is not to advocate letting a child fulfill every desire of their heart if they are obviously not good for them. No one would suggest that letting a child idle away time watching TV or DVDs for hours on end is an appropriate way to spend the summer. As John Rosemond in the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* writes,



"The next time your child watches television look at him instead of the screen. Ask yourself, "What is he doing?" Better yet, ask yourself, "What is he not doing?" He is not practicing motor skills, gross or fine. He is not using more than two senses. He is not asking questions. He is not exploring. He is not exercising initiative or imagination. He is not being challenged. He is not solving problems. He is not thinking analytically. He is not practicing communication skills. He is not being creative or constructive. Television does not promote long term attention, nor does it promote logical, sequential thinking."

Rosemond concludes that deficiencies in these areas are all marks of learning-disabled children who don't seem to get it all together when it comes to learning how to read and write.

As parents seek to find a balance for their children between structured time found at camps, sports etc. and unorganized, creative play, as well as the entertainment found in TV viewing verses reading etc., I'm reminded of the words of Martyn Lloyd-Jones: *"It seems to be the besetting sin of mankind, that there is nothing so difficult as to maintain a balance."* Praise be to God that He invites us before His throne of grace to seek wisdom in order to know and maintain this balance (James 1:5).

Has your time so far this summer with your children been fun or frustrating? Or a little of both? Former CPC Ruling Elder Ed Harris (who at the age of 49 became an instant dad to three elementary age children), when interviewed about parenting, stressed the concept of parenting as a "grace experience." Indeed, we cling to Christ and His Word ...and God, who is full of mercy and grace, is faithful to His people. *All praise and glory be to God!*

1. Neil Postman, *The Disappearance of Childhood*
2. Ron Habermas, *Christianity Today*

10 WAYS TO RUIN YOUR CHILD'S IMAGINATION

1. Begin by rearing children almost exclusively indoors – give in to the threats of the outdoors, don't risk allowing them to have unbridled experiences out of our observable space. Lock them up in classes and organized instruction and avoid giving them opportunities to run free.

2. Never allow children to organize their own worlds of exploration of that which is interesting or challenging—replace the spontaneous and child initiated and replace it with 7 days of structured activities controlled by others and a timetable that leaves no scope for exploration, time wasting, and contemplation.

3. Don't risk allowing children to explore machines or encounter those who know and use them—privilege safety above all things, cut craftsmen from the child's world, despise practical and craft knowledge, forget about the challenge and fascination of maps, diagrams and the like.

4. REPLACE FAIRY TALES WITH CLICHÉS AND FADS—WATER DOWN STORIES TO REMOVE THE EVIL AND VIOLENT, LOOK FOR TALES THAT 'FLATTEN' AND HOMOGENIZE, REPLACE FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS WITH CLICHÉS AND IDEOLOGICAL MANIFESTOS.

5. Denigrate or discard the heroic and patriotic—remove fathers who are heroes, men who are warriors, lose sight of the 'piety' of a place like the Welsh uplands and coal mines of Richard Llewellyn's 'How Green was My Valley.' Ignore the dignity of simple people and their ways.

6. Cut down all heroes to size—don't allow a sentimental admiration of a hero, dismiss courage, beat from our boys any hint of hero worship. Instead grow men 'without chests' who spend hours on violent video games but never rumble in the back yard.

7. Reduce all talk of love to narcissism and sex – replace the music and tenderness of love in the Odyssey, or the poetry of Stephen Foster for a lost love, with a reduction of love to the mechanics of sex, "reduce eros to the itch of lust or vanity." Replace the first pangs of curiosity of a boy for a girl, or a girl for a boy, with a bombardment of images of what love isn't.

8. Level all distinctions between man and woman—just as individual personalities are washed from our classrooms, so too, reduce all differences of gender, and convince children that boys & girls are just the same.

9. Distract the child with the shallow or unreal—fail to encourage the child to hear and sharpen the senses before creating, abolish solitude and silence, fill the child's life with the 'noise' of television, video games and other forms of banality. Don't just give decibels of noise but rather, more importantly, mental and spiritual interference. Separate the child from the relationship of family, neighbors and friends and place them in after school care, preschools etc.

10. Deny the transcendent—deny the idea of God, ignore the mystery of faith and religion, ensure that unlike the ancients in the caves of Lascaux there is little opportunity to contemplate and create a veritable cathedral born of their imaginings. Do everything possible to erase any opportunity for your child to search out the inscriptions of praise on each human heart.

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