



THE STATE — OF THE — YOUTH

NOVEMBER 2023

412 LATELY

Fall. Is. Here.

Whether you like the fall or don't like the fall, there is no denying this is, most definitely, the most exciting time of the year for our church! It is exciting because we are incredibly busy doing ministry for our community. October was an absolute blast in the 412 student ministry. As for Wednesday night AXIS, we finished up our series on the lives and legacies of the prophets Elijah and Elisha. Let me tell you, I have enjoyed teaching on these men so much. I have learned a lot just from teaching this series and my prayer is that the teenagers did as well. I remember when I was a teenager in the youth group and how I still don't remember probably 90% of the lessons my youth pastor preached. But there are many things I do remember and it's those things that have stuck with me my whole life and I carry into my adulthood today. That is all I can hope for with these teenagers, that God is working in them to latch onto at least one thing from each lesson or series we do that will help them grow closer to Him. We have now started a new series we are calling True and Better. In these 5 weeks we are looking at different characters in the Bible that serve as "types" of Jesus. Meaning their lives and legacies point towards Christ and his ultimate fulfillment of what they tried to do.



-Sunday Morning Bible Study testing out my new phone



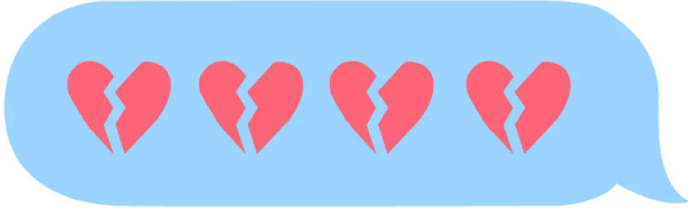
-Carter O'Dell praying before a volleyball game

As for other fun events, we had another AfterLife. This month we went to the Vortex Arcade in Sherwood. It's always good to get off the church campus every now and then and we always love going to the arcade. Ok, I at least enjoy letting the kids appreciate the quality of video games they have today! We also attended Fields of Faith this month, which is a Fellowship of Christian Athletes sponsored event with an attempt to reach schools through their sports programs. We enjoy getting to go every year and supporting our FCA chapters.

Lastly, we have some new merch out for the Fall! It's been a while since we did a shirt or any kind of 412 merch so we decided to do a sweatshirt and a T-shirt, and those are available by order for anyone!

We look forward to seeing how November goes and what God is going to do through our students!

Saturday 12:48 AM



MARRIED AT FIRST LIKE

There is no debate that the world has been forever changed by the technology of our time, that's the point of technology. But none more so than the advent of the smart phone and internet. Now, this is also not breaking news to anyone, we know we have all been changed by these new tools. But this month I want to discuss a very specific change that the smart phone/internet has made on young people. And it has to do with dating.

GEN Z LINGO

“In their bag”; verb/adjective. - If someone is “in his/her bag” they are doing a very good job at whatever they are doing. Synonymous with being “in the zone” or “firing on all cylinders”.

Example 1: Stephen was *in his bag* last Wednesday during that sermon. (Stephen was doing really well during his sermon) Example 2: Lisa was *in her bag* when she was designing these T-shirts. (Lisa made some really cool T-Shirts)

GEN Z LINGO

“Facts”; expression - An agreement with what someone said.

Synonymous with “that’s the truth” or “you are speaking the truth”, just simplified.

Example:

Carter: Man Stephen was really in his bag Wednesday night.

Noah: Facts.

THEOLOGY 101

Sovereignty – The rule and authority God has over all of His creation to do what He wills. God exercises his rule through His Lordship and control over all things. Psalm 115:3; Isaiah 14:24-27; Acts 17:26; James 4:13-16.

Memory Verse: Psalm 135:6

Now before you click off, and resign me to saying something you already know and don’t want to hear about, let me remind you that I too was also a teenager very recently. Not only was I a teenager recently, but I was apart of the generation of teens who, as we graduated to a new grade, so did the smartphone. I was in the very thick of teenagers trying to learn how to use smartphones for our own gain and, well, be teenagers. And I can assure you, as of 2023, they have fully figured it out.

However, something new that has progressed in the past few years, that, at least did not seem common for me, is the dating aspect of smartphones. Yes when I was in high school we used our phones to communicate with our significant others, but it was purely through text message, and most of which was monitored by our parents. Now with the invention of many social medias and apps, kids can communicate with each other from anywhere, at any time, completely undetected and unsupervised. What this has done to the teenage relationship has given teenage “couples” a level of communication like that of a married couple. Yes you heard that correctly, you’ve probably even seen it if you have been around teenagers for any decent amount of time. “Couples” in high school now treat their significant other as if they are basically already married. What I don’t mean is that they are being regular teenagers who have high hopes about their boyfriend or girlfriend and are just “blinded by love”. I mean they communicate like married people, they treat each other as if they have vows, and if you don’t have a significant other than something must be wrong with you or you’re gay (which is topic for another day). This is very common now for most high schoolers, and something they are having to deal with. Never before in human history, have teenagers, especially those of the opposite sex, had access to this much communication.

So then we have to ask the question... What do we do about it? What do you mom, dad, grandparent of preteens, do about this cultural phenomenon? Well first of all, you as a parent have to make the decision of how much access to the internet you will give your preteen. Then again let’s be honest, it’s almost 2024, and there’s no slowing down the internet. Yet I don’t think it’s an internet problem, and I don’t think it’s a smartphone problem.

I believe, as I do a lot of things, it's a theological problem. The Bible says to bring a child up in the way they should go, and when they are old they will not depart from it. This has nothing to do with your parental policy on cellphones. But this does have everything to do with what they know about the Word of God. What we are seeing with the way that teenagers communicate and date these days, all stems from the way they view relationships in their own life. It comes from what they see on TV, what music they listen to, and what they see at home. These teenagers don't know how to go about having a relationship with the opposite sex; they don't know anything about the opposite sex! But they are learning, and they are learning faster than any other generation of teenagers ever could because of technology.

I've said it before and I will say it again, I do not even attempt to give parenting advice, because I have no idea what it's like. And unfortunately, there is not really any biblical help on dating. You, as a parent of a preteen, will have to eventually deal with these issues. You will have to decide how much access they have to the internet, when and where they get to have their phones, and most importantly, what they know to be true about what the bible says about Godly marriage. Your preteen is headed into a world that wants to pull them into the waters of life way before they are ready. Be sure that they know you are swimming right beside them. Teach them to swim before their friends and social media does, because if you don't they will eventually find themselves too far out and in need of rescue. I'm praying for you, and remember, you are not alone.

Following His Lead,

Stephen Yates

Associate Pastor of Student and Young Adults



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