

E-Newsletters and Other Resources

(compiled by Eric Gargus for the families of Pleasant Valley South Baptist Church AND for families who are not yet a part of our church)

the
CULTURE
translator



1. Sign up for our Student Fusion Parent E-Mailing List:

Simply email eric.gargus@pvsbc.org to sign up.

2. Sign up for our Parent-Only Remind texts:

Class code: @parhelp702

3. Visit our Student Fusion Parent Page regularly. New content will be added monthly!

<https://www.pleasantvalleysouth.org/studentfusion/student-fusion-parent-page/>

4. Sign up for “The Culture Translator” (free e-newsletter from Axis) at:

https://axis.org/culture-translator/?utm_campaign=The%20Culture%20Translator&utm_medium=email&hsmi=289616064&hsenc=p2ANqtz-8hvHs9kK7kRuEeSKaYwuvUKAx2IpUbpGTStdqnRg86NC6HVrlyrgTmb3ibnHESDX2w7bk86Qg69U_F24aTv-41tL12xA&utm_content=289549687&utm_source=hs_email

Sample content from January 12, 2024:

Three Things This Week

1

Pay-to-See TV

What it is: Virtually all the big streaming platforms have announced that their services will cost more and feature more advertising in 2024. Commercials are so back.

What else to know: Just a [few decades ago](#), the tactics of various broadcasting companies was a matter of public ethical concern—and fierce debate. (In his days as a young Tennessee senator, Al Gore accused one cable company executive of conducting a "shake down" on American consumers during a congressional hearing on the matter.) These days, perspectives appear to have shifted. American consumers seem to quietly accept that they will pay more and more money (more, perhaps, than cable ever cost) in order to access vast libraries of commercial-ridden content-on-demand. At least, that's what Netflix, HBO, Disney+, Hulu, Amazon, and Peacock are [all willing to bet](#).

Continue the conversation: *What behaviors from a company would make you cancel a streaming service?*

2

Discontented

What it is: Meta announced this week that going forward, it will default teen users into its most restrictive content setting.

What it means: For years, Meta has protested against parent and teen advocates who criticized its lack of care for teen users. But the headline of Meta's new blog post might as well be an admission of guilt. "[New Protections to Give Teens More Age-Appropriate Experiences on Our Apps](#)" raises an obvious question: If they're age-appropriate now, what were they before? All users under 18 who currently have Facebook and Instagram accounts will be automatically opted into a filtering tool that will hide content featuring self-harm, suicide, and eating disorders. They also say they will hide content that features nudity, even if it's from accounts teens follow.

Continue the conversation: *What would a content policy that actually kept teens safe online look like?*

3

Who's Afraid of Andrew Tate?

What it is: American-British social media personality Andrew Tate has quieted down as he

navigates serious accusations of sexual assault. Writers and documentary filmmakers are [trying to understand](#) what made him so popular to begin with.

Why are we still talking about this guy? Much has been said about Tate's very public statements on promiscuity, male dominance, and how men should treat women. The very idea that a person could attract a huge online following while openly discussing the degradation and objectification of females was disturbing to many. But behind Tate's bombastic, macho persona is something else: he personifies the formula for financial success and personal worth that he also happens to sell a monthly subscription to. The desire to be someone like Tate, if not someone who shares his worst traits, has made waves with young men on both sides of the Atlantic. Britons surveyed in a [YouGov poll](#) said that they agreed with what Tate had to say about masculinity, work, and success—even if they did not agree with what he had to say about women.

Continue the conversation: *Are there any "red flag" opinions or statements that would make you unfollow someone on social media right away, even if you admired them?*

Song of the Week

"greedy" by Tate McRae: Tate McRae is no newcomer on the cultural landscape, but her album, "THINK LATER," has been a breakout success for the young singer/songwriter. This success is led by her single "greedy", which has hovered in the top 50 of most notable music charts for months now—even Christmas music couldn't dethrone it. Lyrically, "greedy" describes the tension of knowing you're a great catch, but probably a bad girlfriend. Musically, it's an upbeat, rhythmic pop song that features McRae's musical calling-card of happy, bright sounding music with darker, more biting lyrics. For said lyrics, click [here](#) (*language*).

Overcoming Unwanted Sexual Behavior

Modern society is built on pain avoidance. From a young age, whenever something painful or difficult happens, we learn to numb ourselves or find a coping mechanism. Anything from screen time, to shopping, to substance abuse, to pornography can become our anesthetic. Resisting these pain-avoidance crutches can get complicated. To really heal from our addictions, big and small, we have to address the pain that we were running from in the first place.

This week, we're reposting our podcast conversation with [Jay Stringer](#), a counselor, minister, and speaker dedicated to helping both men and women find freedom from sexual brokenness. In our conversation, Stringer unpacks how the sexual behaviors we wish we could stop engaging in typically come out of misguided attempts to meet legitimate, God-given desires. A longing for acceptance or a feeling of powerlessness can shape a person's sexual desires without them even realizing it.

As Stringer puts it, "One evening of deliberate curiosity [about] your sexual fantasies will take you further into transformation than 1,000 nights of prayerful despair." He believes that when someone takes the time to understand why they might be tempted by a particular type of porn or sexual activity, they often discover a road map to the deeper healing needed in their life.

A [survey](#) released in 2023 found that 73% of teens had viewed porn, and that this exposure was already shaping how they viewed sex and sexual relationships. What might start out as a natural curiosity about the human body can easily turn into a form of sexual brainwashing, and an ever-present method of avoiding reality. But the solution Stringer proposes is not behavior modification or hating ourselves into purity—rather, it's a willingness to examine our own stories with kindness and curiosity, and a recognition that lust is often just a symptom of the unresolved issues that Jesus wants to heal. We serve a God who, after all, has been there; as Hebrews 4:15 puts it, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin."

For the full conversation, check out this [Wednesday's episode](#) of our Culture Translator podcast. In the meantime, here are three questions to help spark conversation with the teens in your life:

- In our culture, what do you think are the most common things people use to numb themselves to emotional pain?
- What would a healthy way of dealing with pain look like?
- What do you think happens to someone who always tries to avoid their pain instead of facing it directly?

Parenting together,
The Axis Team

*"Culture translation is a game changer for me. It helps me win by keeping me in the know on what my kids are talking about. The real win though is that **it's so easy for me to then leverage that relevant knowledge** to talk about how our faith intersects with what's going on in the world." - Michael*

To help more parents like Michael, make a gift of support at axis.org/give today!

5. "Smart Social Newsletter (free e-newsletter from Smart Social) at:

<https://smartsocial.com/newsletter>

Sample Content from this month's newsletter:

Josh here from SmartSocial.com.

Today's resources in this newsletter:

- Is your teen oversharing online? Find out what to do about it.
- Digital resumes set students apart. Find out why the time to have one is now.
- Can teen life coaching help your child? Find out why we feel it is essential.

This Week's Parent Resource:

10+ Ways Students Can Avoid Oversharing Online

Oversharing is Common for Teens but it Can Hurt Them

When teens first start gaining access to social media, one of the most common mistakes they make is oversharing online. Without having a solid understanding of

what is and is not appropriate to post, they are at risk of posting something that could have a negative impact on their reputation.

What can you do if your child is already oversharing online (or you suspect they are)? [Find out in today's resource.](#)

[10+ Ways Students Can Avoid Oversharing Online](#)

Expert Tips for Students on Building a Digital Resume

Why is a Digital Resume So Important for Your Teen Right Now?

Many teens think of creating a resume as something they will do after college, but it is becoming increasingly important for students to have a digital resume in high school.

We asked the experts what students need to know before creating their first digital resume. These tips will help students get noticed so they can have access to some amazing opportunities. [Learn more in today's resource.](#)

[Expert Tips for Students on Building a Digital Resume](#)

Last Week's Parent Resource:

Simplify School Projects with These Top Graphics Apps

Your child is likely already using one of the most popular graphics apps of 2024. Find out what you need to know.

Graphics apps can be a fun way to add some creativity to school projects or just explore the world of graphic design. These apps are hugely popular with teens, but are the apps your kids are using safe?

Explore all of 2024's most popular graphics apps [in today's resource.](#)

[Best Graphics Apps for Students \(2024\): What Parents, Educators, & Students Need to Know](#)

Is Your Teen's Excessive Screen Time Causing Challenges at Home? Teen Coaching Can Help

Our [new expert parent coach has been a HUGE hit](#) and she is available **THIS AFTERNOON and Next Thursday** to listen to your family's needs, help you find a solution with our VIP resources, and make sure you are comfortable with a plan.

Typically, a session with our coaches is valued at \$100. However, we're excited to offer a limited-time opportunity for our VIP members: SmartSocial's nonprofit will cover the majority of this cost, reducing the price to only \$10 for our subscribers.

[Watch the full podcast with our expert parent coach here.](#)

If you're a VIP Member or affiliated with one of our VIP partner schools, we'll even refund your \$10 when you attend the scheduled meeting, making this 100% free for your family.

[Book a time to chat with our expert parent coach here](#) (we have limited availability this week). Reserve your session today to get peace of mind.

Subscribe to the SmartSocial.com Podcast and YouTube channel to get the newest episodes

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Educators: Do you want to host live parent night events for your community? We have a virtual solution that engages parents and students.

- Educators: [Click here to chat with us and try out our live events and resources for your community](#)
- Our program offers ready-to-deliver resources that inform parents, educators, and students on the hottest topics and dangerous challenges in social media and digital citizenship. We cover social media addiction, TikTok challenges, Instagram, Snapchat, and 100+ other apps and dangers
- Share this newsletter with your Principal or district leaders so they can get a free 1-month demo account

Thanks for your support and for helping us keep kids safe online!

- Josh Ochs, Founder of SmartSocial.com