



Fortnite: Your Child(ren)'s Latest Obsession

Fortnite...it seems as though a day doesn't go by where I don't hear something about Fortnite. For those of you that haven't been introduced to this word, allow me a moment to bring you up-to-date.

Fortnite, is a game with which a majority of kids (of all ages) are engaged in these days. And while it seems to be mostly boys, the obsession is not limited to gender. The popular game or topic among kids was something completely different a year ago, and chances are good that it will be something completely different a year from now. But for today, it's Fortnite. And even though it is rated "T" for Teen, many parents of younger kids are allowing their children to explore it - no judgement, just stating an observation

Many parents have compromised because of its cartoonish nature, or the lack of profanity or blood. There are sites and commentaries arguing in favor of the game because of the advantages of strategic thinking, teamwork and creativity. Even so, there are sites and commentaries arguing that it is still violent, and the online nature still exposes younger players to the offensive language of other players.

Wherever you land in your decision on Fortnite . . . or Minecraft . . . or Call of Duty . . . or whatever game takes the "child world" by storm next, might I be so bold as to encourage you to make sure that your child(ren) spends more time in reality than in virtual activity? Maybe just make sure that he/she spends more time throwing a real football - than playing Madden NFL. Make sure he/she engages in real conversations about everyday activities while making eye contact with you (or others) – to offset the amount of time that is spent wearing a headset and talking to another person with whom they can only hear yet not make eye contact. Make sure to set an example of putting down the phone yourself and being engaged in person rather than texting or messaging when speaking to others.

Get your child(ren) involved in a club or a sport. Encourage them to join a robotics team or the band or choir. Make youth group a priority for them until they make it a priority for themselves. Help your child(ren) be part of something that allows them to experience real teamwork, human interaction, strategic thinking, creativity, and to practice empathy.

Sure, let your child(ren) have time to enjoy video games – just do it with limitations as a means of practicing regulation. While researching Fortnite I ran across a blog where a single mom, who was choosing to let her child's engagement with gaming serve as a vehicle for strengthening his ability to regulate himself, shared the following three rules for gaming that they follow in their home. Maybe you might find them helpful too...

1. Offer 5 extra minutes of play the following day for turning off the game without arguing. Take away 15 minutes the next day for arguing or attempting to bargain with you when it's time to shut it down;
2. While you can't control what your child(ren) hears when they have the headset on, be clear that if they repeat something profane or disrespectful, the headset gets put up for a week;
3. Every time your child(ren) turns the system off, they owe you 20 minutes of physical activity, to counter the effects of sitting still and being plugged in.

Until next time, may your gamers have plenty of "heals" as they move towards "the bubble".



Stewardship. A Step Further.

We all know plenty of good people who are wealthy. Having money is not intrinsically evil, nor is living in poverty now necessarily blessed. Jesus warned that trusting in wealth and using it to gain power is an impediment to our spiritual development and growth. God has a far different definition of wealth than most of us do. God measures wealth by the quality of our lives! We are to be rich in good works and generous, ready to share (1 Timothy 6:18).

John Wesley had three rules on finance that he taught the early Methodists as he sought to reform giving to the church from taxation to willful giving:

1. **Earn all you can** – He believed that we should use our talents and circumstances to earn all the money we can as long as it is not earned in a destructive way causing pain or suffering to the earner or others. How you earn the money matters.
2. **Save all you can** – Wesley believed that we should live simply, and he practiced that himself. He lived on the same amount of money no matter what he earned and challenged others to do the same. He taught that anything we accumulate that is unnecessary is taking from the poor and that part of our stewardship is figuring out what we are willing to do without. This after we take care of our debts and our families.
3. **Give all you can** – Wesley said, “giving is the very nature of God, whose nature is love, which is the emptying of oneself on behalf of others”. Grace poured out. He also believed that affluence separates us from the poor and from God, which should be our motivation for giving. He believed that the more you made, the more you should give; that you “increase your standard of giving, not your standard of living”.

How do our lives reflect Jesus’ many reminders in His teaching to “store up treasure in heaven and not on earth”? Are we giving all we can, as John Wesley taught, to carry out the mission of the church reflecting God’s nature of love?

Be Thou My Vision, O Lord of My Heart...

2019 Trinity UMC Lent Devotional

Thank you to every person who helped to make the 2019 Trinity Lent Devotional a possibility by contributing a devotion! Each year that we put the devotionals together, I am convinced that there is no way that your devotions could get any better - and yet, every year you step it up another notch! This year was no exception! Those of you that took the time to share the messages that God placed on your hearts have given us all a gift that no money could buy. Thank you for putting pen to paper or fingers to keyboard so that the leading of the Holy Spirit could be experienced by us all. And thank you to those of you that made sure to get your devotionals to us by February 24th! Our prayer for you is that you were blessed in the writing of your devotionals as much as we will be in reading your devotionals.

We would also like to offer a special “thank you” to Mr. Butch Galloway and his contribution to the devotional this year as he helped us to make the format and the binding of the booklet as user friendly as possible! Your expertise is invaluable to us all!

If you have not yet picked up your copy of the 2019 Trinity UMC Lent Devotional, please do so! You will find available copies in the Narthex, the Fellowship Hall, the Discipleship Ministries Office as well as the Church Office. Grab a copy for you and for a friend!

