



stress, and the death of a parent. Fears have shifted away from threats to life and limb and toward social fear and the fear of one's own emotions.

Christian teens are not exempt from fear. It forms their behavior also. The main reason they don't share about their faith is that

In the western world today, few teens fear starvation. They don't fear invasion or being overrun by a foreign army. They don't fear a plague. They don't fear torture from their own government or drought or pestilence.

Those fears were real for most human beings throughout history. Not being subject to those fears is good.

But fear has not disappeared as a major issue in teens' lives. They are still afraid. They fear failure, rejection, being alone, depression, the future, violence, crime,

they fear being rejected by their peers and friends.

The antidote to fear is courage. Youth overcome fear by facing it. Some ways of helping teens face fear include:

- Public speaking or performance
- Witnessing to their faith
- Pushing their physical limits
- Pushing their emotional limits
- Standing up to peer pressure
- Doing new, challenging service
- Enduring pain and hard work.

Let's help our youth by giving them opportunities to grow in courage.

### THE INCREASING APPEAL OF HORROR FILMS

Two of the most common adjectives in the teenage vocabulary are *cool* and *boring*. That's not new, it's just that the stimulation required to overcome boredom is now higher. Why?

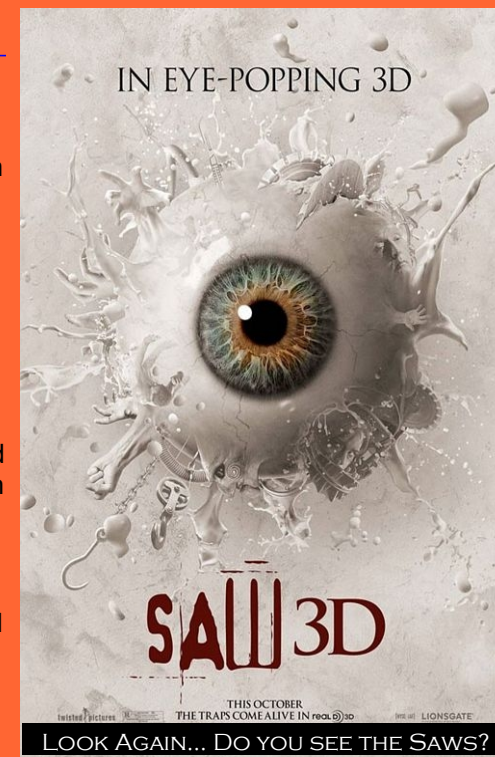
Every parent knows that television is an effective pacifier for young children; it grabs and holds their attention. But it has a side effect. The more television young children watch, the more likely they are to have trouble paying [attention](#) and concentrating as they get older. They are conditioned to desire higher stimulation and are more easily distracted. With less time spent in the world of reality and more spent in the world of TV, movies, and video games, many modern kids have been raised to be overstimulated.

Hollywood has caused itself a problem. It must constantly "up its game" with faster, bolder, and more captivating screen bling in order to own a teen's attention. Horror films are one way to do that. (Happy HALLOWEEN X)

The horror genre has increased both its output and its ability to shock the viewer. In 1997 there were [81](#) horror films produced. By 2009 that number increased

to [874](#), nearly an 11-fold increase in output. Total film output in the same period grew only 3.5-fold.

As 3D movies become easier and cheaper to produce, the horror genre is finding its ideal mate for getting people to jump out of their seats in the movie theater. It is all part of what they think must be done to hold the attention of the modern young viewer.



## GRAVE LOVE

What better way to collect for the local food pantry than a [zombie hunger walk](#)? And what little girl wouldn't love to have her very own [vampire-themed birthday party](#)? The undead are in, enjoying a pop culture surge, and the book, movie, and gaming industries are quite happy to meet the demand.

This new fascination with the undead seems to divide itself into roughly two camps: vampire-romance for girls and zombie-gore for guys – though zombies seem to enjoy more popularity across the sexes than tender vampires.

Most of us are familiar with the *Twilight* series – a romance in four parts in which the hot objects of a young woman's affection are a vampire and werewolf. The books have been immensely popular, as are the movies based on them. Their fame has spawned a number of like-themed books, flooding the 12- to 18-year-old young adult literature market. (See book list at right.)

On the zombie front, [movies featuring the walking dead](#) have enjoyed a large bump in the last decade. This particular genre of horror has gained market share and enjoyed better billing as major motion pictures starring “A-list” actors.

Video games are also jumping onto the zombie bandwagon. Some series feature these creatures, like *Left 4 Dead*

and *Resident Evil*. Others, like *Halo 3* and *Call of Duty: World at War*, have “unlockable” appearances built into the game. Since dispatching a zombie requires quite a bit of mutilation, these games tend to be dark and very violent. (Yes, there is a “cute, family friendly” zombie alternative: *Plants vs. Zombies*.)

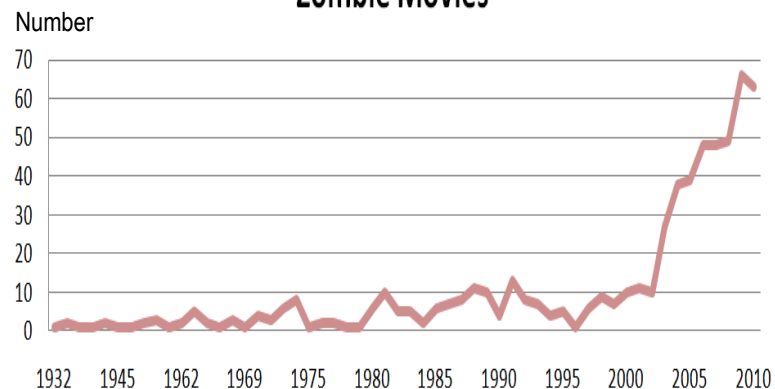
Romance novels and gore are not exactly helpful for teens. But many titles in this genre are of concern because they mix bad with something worse – but pass it off lightly. These books, movies, and games present the occult as harmless fun. The demonic appear as caricatures: ghosts, vampires, and zombies. While we need not fear them, what lies behind them (and makes them interesting) is a very real, very powerful, and very dangerous enemy.

While different works in the vampire-romance and zombie-gore universe vary in severity on the crap-o-meter, they do not align well with Philippians 4:8 “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

Our Lord is God of the living, and not the dead; as his followers, we would do well to spend our free time in his kingdom, not with zombies or vampires – even hot ones.

– James Munk

## Zombie Movies



## Current Best Selling Teen Books from Barnes and Noble

1. *Misguided Angel*, (*Blue Bloods Series #5*) by Melissa de la Cruz
2. *Crescendo*, by Becca Fitzpatrick
3. *Mockingjay*, (*Hunger Games #3*) by Suzanne Collins
4. *Torment*, (*Lauren Kate's Fallen Series #2*) by Lauren Kate
5. *The Hunger Games*, (*Hunger Games #1*) by Suzanne Collins
6. *Catching Fire*, (*Hunger Games #2*) by Suzanne Collins
7. *Hunger Games Trilogy*, (Boxed Set), by Suzanne Collins
8. *Clockwork Angel*, (*The Infernal Devices*) by Cassandra Clare
9. *Beautiful Darkness*, by Kami Garcia
10. *Ghost Town*, (*Morganville Vampires #9*) by Rachel Caine

Every one of the above books is dark in its theme. They are about vampires, fallen angels, or a dismal, depressing future.

Is it a surprise? A soon to be released [study](#) shows that five times as many high school and college students now deal with anxiety and other mental health issues as youth of the same age did in the Great Depression era.

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