

A Great Distraction

The main goal of the devil is not to get you to do the wrong thing. It is to get you to do anything but the right thing. He didn't care which false god Israel worshiped. Any would do, as long as it distracted them from the true God.

The world provides the devil with more options than ever to distract us. When bombarded with the spectacular, who pays attention to the dull? The news in your neighborhood is reality. It's just not as eye-catching as a tsunami in Taiwan or a hurricane in Haiti or a bomb in Belfast. Prayer, Bible reading, and helping your neighbor don't hold a

candle to wildfires threatening celebrity homes in Hollywood.

The media compete to hold our attention and the devil doesn't care who wins: Baal, the internet, texting or Ashtaroth.



Television eye candy is addictive. It grabs your eyeball and won't let go. The world doesn't need to ban

books, good works, family, or church, it just displaces them with non-stop distractions for the eye and ear. We trade fulfillment for fulfillment.

Watch any movie trailer and count the number of shot changes you see in 30 seconds.

In 1953 the average shot in American movies lasted 27.9 seconds. By 1986 it had fallen to 7.3 seconds. In 2007 it was a mere 2.5 seconds.

We have probably reached the floor. Visual media at this pace creates brain stupor. Retaining information becomes nearly impossible.

Being careful about what you watch is important, but being careful about

"I'm proud to be an American because we still lead the world in stimuli!"

Don DeLillo

how much you watch is at least as important. A drug-induced stupor may be more dangerous than one induced by television or online surfing, but a stupor is a stupor, and these days Americans are choosing for more stupor than ever.

For youth to choose the right thing they must learn to control the non-stop stimuli and constant sources of distraction. That's life in the modern world.

My heart searches restlessly and finds no rest until it rests in thee.

St. Augustine (Ed Conlin lyrics)

Girls will be girls?

In America, there are role models for every girl, for example, Miss USA, Rima Fakih. (The Miss USA beauty contest is owned by Donald Trump.)

Rima is the first Arab-American to win the contest. Her family is Shia Muslim, but she is not getting very positive reviews from the Muslim world. The swimsuit competition is only part of the problem.



Rima is also a contestant on Worldwide Wrestling Entertainment's television series *Tough Enough* (3.3 million viewers). This is a competition to find the next, uh, athlete to enter the ring on *Wrestlemania*, *Raw* or *Smackdown*.

Proving you are tough enough means insulting the other women, fighting with them, and using the f-word as regularly as possible.

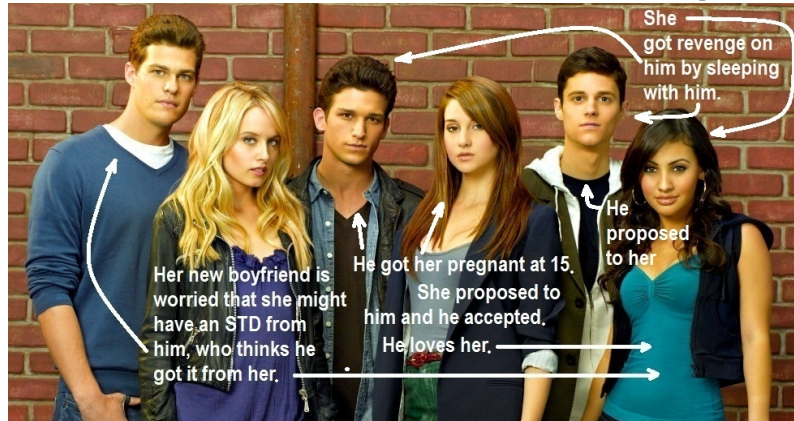


Secret Life of the American Teenager. They are on at the same time.

Well, at least her mother supports her: "Yeah, my daughter can kick butt."

O.K. If you don't want to watch this, just flip the channel and watch *The Real Housewives of New York City* or *The*

The Secret Life of the American Teenager



Amy has a baby at 15 after a one-night stand with Ricky; Ricky's girlfriend, Adrian, wants revenge so she sleeps with Ben – and gets pregnant. Although Ben loves Amy, he proposes to Adrian. Grace is a "devoted Christian" but has sex with Jack and regrets it. She decides to get tested for STDs before she can safely have sex with her new love, Grant.

Such is the drama on *The Secret Life of the American Teenager*, a cable TV series now in its third season. *Secret Life* jumped [379%](#) in total viewership since last year and has top numbers in the key demographics of 12- to 34-year-olds, all teens, and especially, female teens.

So, where are the TV parents while all this sex is going on? One dad is getting birth control pills for his daughter without her mom's knowledge. A mom is helping hide her daughter's sexual escapades from her dad. Another mom asks her 16-year-old daughter and boyfriend to wait to have sex, but leaves it up to them as "their decision," and another mom, just out of prison for doing drugs, needs her 17-year-old to help her get back on her feet. Not to be outdone by

their children, the parents are engaging in sexual affairs themselves.

Besides the obvious danger of profiling a hyper-sexualized lifestyle, there is the more subtle problem of presenting pregnancy as just another possible adventure for a teen. Being impregnated by a classmate at 15 becomes the exciting storyline for following a young girl's travails, and it is oh-so-romantic when the guy sticks by his gal. Season three adds the suspense of possible weddings between 17- and 18-year-olds. It plucks the heartstrings of every girl in the audience.

And how is Christianity portrayed? Well, the Christian kids – Grace, who wears a purity ring, and Grant -- have just "carefully and honestly" reasoned their way up to the next step on the sexual sin ladder. Grace's devout mom, Kathleen, thinks it's fine. [Spoiler alert](#): Grace will be unfaithful with a new guy named Daniel in season 4, but she'll regret it, just like a good Christian girl should.

Secret Life uses the word sex an average of [25 times](#) per episode as the teenagers discuss their sexual desires and exploits in explicit detail. The program is broadcast on the [ABC Family Channel](#) (*family!*), formerly known as the Christian Broadcasting Network, begun by the televangelist Pat Robertson in 1977.

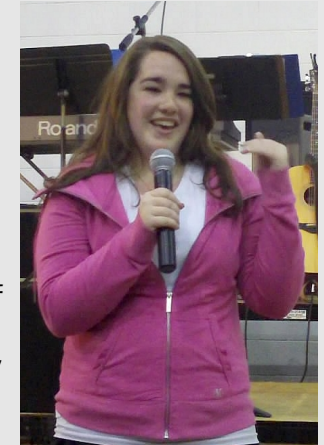


Debbie Putnam

(See what teens are blogging about it all: <http://bit.ly/sl-blog>)

The Secret Life of Another American Teenager

Jenny Roby gave this testimony at last month's Y.E.S. retreat.



I attend a public high school. I know girls who are pregnant and the hard decisions they discuss in front of the bathroom mirror. Recently, a girl I hardly know shocked me. She came up to me and asked if I were

religious or not. (She had noticed the necklace I was wearing. It has two crosses and an angel on it.) I said yes. Then she asked me if I would come to school early to pray with her to make the biggest decision of her life: whether or not to have an abortion.

The next morning she told me why she had been thinking about getting an abortion. She didn't know who the father was. There were two possible guys and they both told her to kill the baby since she didn't know which one was the father. They both added that there was no reason to have it when neither one wanted the baby or her.

I prayed with her there in the classroom to make the right decision. The next day she came to thank me for helping her make the best decision of her life – to keep the baby.

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