



A resource to spark biblically-centered conversations with your kids about the issues they face in today's youth culture.

FAST FASHION

BY: Jake Bier, CPYU Research Fellow and Assistant Pastor at Springton Lake Presbyterian Church, Newtown Square, PA

In today's digital world, teenagers are being bombarded by a constant stream of marketing, especially in the form of fast fashion. With just a few clicks, they can order trendy clothing and trinkets from ultra-cheap retailers like Temu, Shein, and Amazon, all marketed to them by social media influencers. Even major brands like Nike and H&M feed the demand for more: more styles, more status, more stuff.

But beneath the surface, fast fashion raises serious concerns about ethics, stewardship, and identity. These issues are not merely economic but are deeply spiritual in nature.



WORLD



What is Happening?

- Fast fashion is booming. Brands like Shein, Temu, and others dominate social media with trendy, ultra-cheap clothing designed to be bought in bulk and discarded quickly.
- Influencer marketing targets teens, flooding their feeds with the latest and greatest fashions—each promising popularity, beauty, and the elusive cool factor. Trends shift fast, keeping the products in constant turnover.
- Many of these companies have been accused of exploitative business practices, ranging from child and slave labor to sweatshop-like working conditions. Products are inexpensive because employees are not paid a fair wage.
- The products themselves are cheaply made and not meant to last, quickly ending up in the landfill.



WORD

What Does God's Word Say?

Mass consumerism is idolatrous and destructive, driven by our insatiable desire for more stuff. The modern convenience of online shopping only exasperates our sinful nature, leading us to buy more than we want and use more than we need. This tendency reveals a deeply rooted sinful love for the things of this world. In Matthew 6:19-21, Jesus warned against this very thing, inviting us to lay up treasures in heaven rather than on earth. In the end, none of our worldly possessions will last, nor will they satisfy the deep longings of our hearts. Teens need to stop looking to get from their stuff what only Jesus can give.

Furthermore, the 8th commandment condemns all forms of theft, including the unethical practices of these exploitative businesses. For Christians, this raises the uncomfortable question of whether we, by purchasing from these companies, are unintentionally contributing to and participating in the abuse of foreign workers, who deserve fair compensation for their work.

Fast fashion is a failure to steward our resources wisely. When we fall into the pattern of quickly buying and discarding, we waste our money and harm the environment. Man has been given dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:26-28), not to exploit and dominate but to care for and cultivate. True stewardship means the wise management of what ultimately belongs to God, not us. In an age of instant gratification, resisting the pull of fast fashion is an act of faithfulness, honoring both Creator and creation.





WALK

Conversation Starters and Questions:

Talk to your kids and see if they have been targeted by these marketing messages. Help them process the ethical and spiritual factors.

Consider asking:

- What is the latest clothing or product trend? Why are trends always changing?
- How do you think these companies are able to sell their products so cheap?
- What do you think happens to your stuff once you throw it away?

As a family, consider:

- What of our possessions can we reuse, repair, or give away? Are there other families in your church or community who could benefit from your unwanted items?
- What are the things that we need? What things can we do without?
- How can we better steward our possessions and the earth?

Our possessions and love for the things of this world can drive us like a slave master, always demanding more. But Jesus is a better master. He took on the form of a servant, giving up everything for us on the cross (Philippians 2:7-11).

When Jesus called the rich young ruler to sell all his possessions and follow him, he missed out on the kingdom of heaven because he didn't want to give up his stuff (Mark 10:17-27). He loved his worldly possessions and was enchained to them.

But Jesus wants to set us free. At the cross, Jesus bore our sin, paid our debt, and broke the chains that held us captive (Colossians 2:13-14). Now He invites us into a life of true joy and lasting treasure—not in accumulating more, but in surrendering all to gain Him.

FURTHER READING:

***101 Ways to Go Zero Waste* by Kathryn Kellogg**

***Fashionopolis: Fast Fashion and the Future of Clothes* by Dana Thomas**

"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world."

(1 John 2:15-16)



Phone: (717) 361-8429
E-Mail: CPYU@CPYU.ORG
Web: WWW.CPYU.ORG

Mail: PO BOX 414,
ELIZABETHTOWN
PA 17022, USA