



Reclaiming God's Good Gift of Sex

Conversation starters about honoring God, ourselves and others

Brian Dietz

Introduction

Sex is a good gift that our loving heavenly Father blessed us with. Sadly, this gift has been misused and abused in many ways and teens face seemingly insurmountable obstacles in trying to navigate our overly sexualized culture. But as much as I want to help the next generation handle their sexuality well, my real goal for the teenage years is to help students own their faith and come to know how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ! Would I like to see teens avoid the destruction and pain caused by the various forms of sexual immorality that they will be tempted by? Of course! But at the end of the day, my true hope is that our community can be a place where teens experience Christ and His people as friends they can turn to for support, grace, wisdom, forgiveness and life no matter where they are or what they do.

So how can we start this conversation? A few suggestions:

1. **Make it part of many spiritual conversations.** One of my favorite parenting books, *The Sticky Faith Guide to Parenting* by Kara Powell, is filled with numerous ideas for how to make faith conversations and interactions a regular part of your family. Allow talking about sex to be one of the various ways you seek to nurture the faith in your family. If we simplify following Jesus down to going to church and not having sex or doing drugs, we get a very small picture of God. This small God will not give teens what they need for all the big issues of this world.
2. **Don't be afraid.** Regardless of past struggles or the way you were brought up, know that God did create sex and it is designed to be a good gift. Receive forgiveness and renew your mind (Romans 12:2, 1 John 1:8-9, Philippians 4:8-9) with regard to any past baggage that causes you to think sex is dirty, bad or meant to be so private it can't be discussed. What if talking to your kids about sex could actually help redeem it for you? What if talking to your kids about sex could actually deepen your relationship with them? Both are very much possible! Pray, talk with your spouse, seek counsel from others and believe that God would love to bless you and your kids through these conversations.
3. **Commit to reclaiming sex as a good gift that can honor God and others.** To counter the many cultural forces that seek to mar the beauty of sex we do need to make a concerted effort to reclaim its goodness. This will require more than just "the talk". An ongoing conversation is needed. And this conversation need not focus primarily on the dangers, though those must be addressed. Rather, view your conversations about sex as another opportunity to teach your kids about how to honor God and honor others.

I've been seeking to help families reclaim sex as God's good gift since 2002 when I first started as a youth pastor. The following are various questions that have come up, primarily from teens we've worked with. While I'll share various resources that you could use to help you have conversations with your kids and teens, I know that reading entire books can be tough. I've also found that some resources and conferences elevate sexual purity to such a high level that teens either become overly self-righteous if they "stay pure" or they become overly guilt-ridden if they

“mess up”. Either scenario has the potential to build up a works-based faith devoid of grace and actual relationship with God. I also find that it is easy to over-focus on not having sex before marriage to the point that teens don’t know how to enjoy their sexuality and prepare well for when it is time to experience intercourse and all that sexual intimacy can be. Sex is a good gift, but despite what the culture and, at times, the church make it seem in taking it to opposite extremes, it is not the critical path to finding life and meaning; Christ is. So I’m hopeful this shorter resource can serve as a simple guide to get you going and cover many of the main topics you will want to address as you seek to reclaim God’s good gift and build more of Christ’s character in to your kids.

I have broken things down in to three categories based on the great commandments to love God and others, with the third category acknowledging that you must also love yourself to fulfill either of these commandments well. I envision two possible ways to use this resource.

1. Read it through as a parent to get yourself ready for conversations about honoring God and others through sex. You can create your own responses or modify the ones I offer as desired as you prepare to discuss things with your teen.
2. Read it through with your teen. This is my suggested option and I know of families that have already utilized this resource in this way with good success. You can ask you teen how they would answer each question first. Then you can read through my response and discuss how they agree or disagree. Note, that at times I define terms and other times I don’t so make sure your teen understands all the terminology and concepts as you go through it. Don’t just assume they get it, even if they say they do. They are likely to only know half-truths or have lots of misinformation.

Whichever way you choose to use this resource, you will be wise to get yourself ready to say key words out loud without cringing or convulsing. It may seem silly, but being ready to talk freely, without stumbling over sexual language, will be a key part of making this conversation comfortable for you and your teen and will go a long way in reclaiming the beauty of sex. So go ahead and practice with these words, saying each one 5 times as you remember that these are beautiful parts of God’s creation, not dirty words to be avoided: Penis, Vagina, Ejaculation, Breasts, Clitoris, Orgasm.

Though the following questions are not exhaustive, they are questions your teen has already been wondering or will be wondering very soon – I’ve heard all of these from middle schoolers in some form or another in the past and recently. It is fairly common for parents to wait too long for these conversations. I suggest that much of the material below be covered by the time your child is in middle school (you can start on much of this even in elementary school) and all of it should be covered before they start high school. If you still have younger kids there are some great resources at the end for starting the conversation about sexuality at age 3. If they don’t hear it from you, they will likely hear it from others. So give them the blessing of helping them start and continue the conversation with you as a way to reclaim God’s good gift of sex.

Honoring God

“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.”

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

It's hard to believe or even fully understand how the Holy Spirit could be in us. But God loves us so much He came to earth as Jesus to be with us and He left His Spirit to even be in us when we commit to follow Him. Our bodies were actually created to be places where God could dwell and could then bless others through us. So sex is like anything else we do in this life in that it provides us an opportunity to honor God and demonstrate our love for Him. God created us to love relationships. In the same way that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all in relationship with each other, we are created to want connection with others as well. When we love others well in the ways that God has designed, those connections can be rich and filled with joy. God has given us His Spirit to help guide us in having a good relationship with Him that will lead to creating good relationships with others. So how can we honor God with our bodies? This first section focuses on what the Bible specifically teaches about enjoying sex as God designed.

Why did God create sex?

God gave sex as a blessing to enable Adam and Eve to be image bearers (the pinnacle of God's creation who most fully represent and reflect who God is) who create like God creates and thus bear fruit and multiply (Genesis 1). Sex is also designed to demonstrate physically how two become one through marriage. It is meant to bond a husband and wife together physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually (Matthew 19:4-6). The two become one flesh (Genesis 2:23-25) and the husband and wife are to love and respect one another as a representation of Christ's love for the church (Ephesians 5:22-33).

Why is sex designed for marriage?

Sex is a powerful gift that is designed to unite two people for their whole lives. God cautions us to flee from sexual immorality (1 Cor. 6:18, 1 Thes. 4:3) which includes sex before marriage or anything else that doesn't respect the power that sex can have. Sex is like heat. Heat can burn our dinner or destroy our house if used improperly. But when used well, it can create a delicious feast and keep us warm all winter. Despite the way that movies make it seem, sex is too powerful to engage in before marriage without it causing our hearts and relationships pain. But when we save that power for marriage, it is an awesome way that God has given us to connect with our spouse. Song of Songs, a book in the Bible that is all about enjoying great sex, gives wise advice not to arouse or awaken love until the time is right (Song of Songs 2:7, 3:5, 8:4). God has designed just the right time for all of us to be marriage.

Should I date only Christians?

To answer this question you should probably ask how important is Jesus to you? If Jesus is just a guy you talk about at church sometimes, then you might be missing out on how much more He has to offer you through a deeper relationship with Him. But if you're committed to honoring Jesus and serving Him with your whole life, why would you want to date someone who doesn't share that goal? The Bible gives wise advice on this one, teaching that being unequally yoked (marrying someone who is not a Christian) is not God's best design for us (2 Corinthians 6:14-16). I believe it is wise to only date people you would be potentially willing to marry. While some people have had success with "missionary dating", I find that to be the exception and not the rule. Far too often people deceive themselves in to thinking the other person will change later, but that

doesn't end up happening. Either the unbeliever pulls down the believer during the dating relationship or once the unbeliever gets married, they typically turn back to their usual patterns of not pursuing Christ. Marrying someone who shares your faith is not only about obeying God, but it is also wise. Dating and marriage can be hard and both partners will need to know all about God's love and grace to help each other build a strong relationship that stands up against challenges.

Honoring Yourself

“You made the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous – how well I know it.”

Psalm 139:13-14 (NLT)

“Love your neighbor, AS YOURSELF”

Mark 12:31

It is often hard for people to enjoy God's good gift of sex because they struggle to believe how good God made them. God created us! He wasn't having a bad day. He didn't make a mistake. He knit each of us together and His works are wonderful! Do you know that? There will be days, weeks, maybe even years where you forget that truth. Some people will try to pretend like they are really great and be super arrogant as they put others down to help them feel better about their own feelings of falling short. Other people will be afraid of interacting with others and will think no one would even want to be their friend because they don't like themselves. Surround yourself with people who remind you of God's love for you regularly. Don't buy the lies when people tell you there is something wrong with who you are. Yes, sin does damage us, but Christ can redeem us. And Christ coming to redeem and forgive us is the most powerful reminder of just how much God LOVES us! Can you then love yourself? Not because you get good grades or play a sport well or can draw or dance or act or make money or look really attractive. Can you love yourself, simply because God LOVES you! He delights in you. He wants to fill you with so much love that that love would then overflow to others. Learn to love yourself and you'll be in a great position to go out and love others in amazing ways!

This next set of questions and responses focuses on aspects of how we need to love ourselves as we prepare to enter in to relationships with the opposite sex.

When should I date?

It would be so nice to have a magical age that when that birthday hits you are transformed in to a Cinderella or Prince Charming (or maybe Katniss Everdeen or Luke Skywalker with Hunger Game, Jedi dating skills would be cooler). But that birthday doesn't exist. Some studies suggest that the earlier you date the more likely you are to have sex before you are married (70% more likely if you start at 12 vs. 16). That makes sense because we all need time to really get to know ourselves well enough to be able to date well. Let's be honest, middle school dating is just awkward and way too stressful – a “long” relationship lasts, what, a week? But getting to know the opposite sex can be a great way to start getting to know yourself and what you would be looking for in a future relationship. So why not hang out in groups with the opposite sex. It is much less pressure, though it still can be challenging and you may even prefer to wait to do that for awhile.

Okay, so back to that magical age. How about 16 as an age to start considering dating? You are able to drive which means you can actually go on a date without having your

mom drive you. But more importantly, you've had some time to sort through high school and the various social and physiological challenges of adolescence. That age seems like a common point where I see students start learning to really know and love themselves in ways that they could make some good dating choices. But the key is not the age as much as it is about your faith and being ready to really love someone else out of the love you are receiving from God. And here's one other tip, dating shouldn't be something you just decide on your own. Ask lots of other people for wisdom and before you date anyone, definitely make sure they meet your parents! It may not seem cool at the beginning, but your parents know you well and their input will be so helpful in making the relationship better!

What do I look for in someone I'm dating?

Again it would be easy to say, just date a Christian. But lots of people would say they are Christians and yet that may just mean they show up at church on Christmas and Easter. It is great they go to church sometimes, but if you are committed to Christ and have a relationship with Him that affects your whole life, dating someone who just goes to church twice a year won't really be a great match. A lot of people choose to date someone because they are "hot". Or maybe because you share something in common like you both enjoy under-water basket weaving. Those aren't bad things, but you want to date someone who can love you with love that comes from God. And the only way that can really happen is if they know God as well.

What is modesty all about?

Modesty is a great way to let people know how confident you are in God's love. It is rather common in our culture to dress in ways that seek to impress people with the way we look. Dressing nicely in ways that demonstrate your beauty and handsomeness are great ways to show off God's amazing work in creating you. Dressing provocatively in ways that try to get people to want you sexually will likely cause you to lose sight of God's love. Seek to attract others with your inner beauty and love others by avoiding wearing clothes that may make them stumble. Things to avoid might be: overly short or tight clothing, low cut tops and anything that reveals your underwear. Someday we can enjoy dressing in ways that show off all our body parts to our spouses and that will be fun when we are alone together. Until then, let's focus on attracting the right kind of spouse by dressing in ways that show off the fullness of who we are inside and out.

What do I do if I am attracted to someone?

That is such a fun thing! Being attracted to someone of the opposite sex is awesome! As you experience those feelings, celebrate your hormones and thank God for creating the person and your desires that make you interested in them! Then go ahead and get to know the person and enjoy being with them. It is great that you enjoy their physical appearance and that you also might enjoy aspects of their personality – they are funny, smart, athletic, etc. Just remember that God knit together the innermost part of you and others too. To experience the fullness of another person, you'll want to get to know more about their faith and their love for God. So don't go around talking to your friends about how "hot" (or whatever other words you might use) people are. Instead, enjoy being attracted to some people, but seek to get to know everyone both inside and out. Some people that the world considers really attractive are actually awful people that you would never want to date. And some people that the world only values for how they look or how they perform would love for someone to actually value them for who they are. You want people to know the real you, so make sure you get to know others for who they really are too.

If I don't get physical will he/she leave me?

Hey, this one does have a magical response. If someone you are in a relationship with demands that you have to get physical with them, run! Break up and don't look back. You are already loved by the God of the universe. If someone says you aren't loveable unless you get physical, that's a flat out lie. And if someone says they can't feel loved by you unless you get physical, they need to get to know God's love the way you do. But it won't help them at all to just get physical.

When you start dating someone it is wise to have a conversation early on about boundaries in your physical relationship. If you discover that your boundaries differ, that is a major red flag. Probably not if one person is okay with kissing and the other is not (assuming the person who is okay with it does not pressure the other person). But, for example, if a person you want to date wants to keep the door open to petting or being naked together, I would throw up a danger flag. When that door is open it is likely to be entered at some point and stopping there is quite a challenge. Plus, I would argue that character is questionable in this example too. Is a person who wants to get as close as possible to pre-marital sex fully committed to honoring God and others with their bodies? I realize this may sound too picky or conservative, but I have known too many people who have gotten burned by negotiating boundaries too much. So talk about it early on and be sure to invite others to help you keep your boundaries.

How long should you date someone before you get married?

This probably seems really far off, but it is not a bad question to ask now so you have something in mind later on. And this question definitely has a ton to do with how well you know and love yourself. It is really easy to get married because you only feel 50% loved and your hope is that your spouse can fill you up the rest of the way. Movies and cheesy Hallmark cards often use the line, "You complete me" when talking about a significant other. But God is the only one who can complete us. Marriage is best enjoyed when two people who are both whole in Christ come together rather than if two people come in looking for the other person to always fill them up.

So getting practical, I think the younger you are, the longer you should date. And even if you are older, consider your minimum to be four seasons (one year) so that you can see each other in all the various contexts that a year brings. Love at first sight is another nice concept that movies make millions off of, but in real life, time is helpful because it allows you to get past infatuation and truly begin to see the other person clearly.

What do I do if I mess up?

Know that God still loves you and is always ready and waiting to restore your broken heart and refill you with His love! Your relationship with God is not simply based on what you do or don't do. It's not all about your performance. Even though it feels like so much of everything else in life is constantly being graded or judged, our faith is not like that. God's love for you goes back to when he created you wonderfully complex. He is saddened when we make choices that draw us away from His love, but His love is still there no matter how much or long we mess up. Keeping yourself pure sexually is a great way to help you stay close and enjoy God's best for you, but so is avoiding gossip, not lying or stealing and not being greedy. In other words, there are many ways we can miss out on God's best for us. Sin is impossible for us to avoid completely and every sinful act will create a barrier in our relationships with God and others. But God is faithful. God is gracious. God is good. God restores! When we confess our sins, He can bring us back. Even if we stumble and seem to ruin sex for ourselves, God loves to make things new again. It may take time and a lot of work on our part, but God is able. He can redeem anything!

So if you mess up, run from whatever caused you to stumble, talk to a trusted, most likely older (parent or youth leader), follower of Christ and begin the journey of redemption. You can still love yourself, because God definitely still does.

Honoring Others

“Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.”

Romans 12:10

Selfishness will be a never-ending battle for us as we seek to love others the way Christ has loved us. Replacing selfishness with honor for others is a noble pursuit. Honoring others involves three key things:

- Treating them as special
- Doing more than what's expected
- Having a good attitude

Sex, in our culture, is primarily presented as a selfish pursuit: a way for us to feel physical pleasure and relational comfort. But when we try to engage in sex selfishly, we steal the true joy that it is meant to offer. Sex is an opportunity to not only honor God by keeping His commands, but it is also an opportunity to honor others by serving and blessing them. So how can we flip things around?

How should we interact with someone of the opposite sex we like?

This is a big question. The foundational concept is certainly to honor one another, but what could that look like practically? Though we often tend to focus a lot on the physical aspects of sex, the emotional aspects are just as important to pay attention to. Our hearts can be a lot like glue, ready to quickly stick to a guy or girl and terribly painful to rip off. So giving what I call “special attention” to any guy or girl is something to be done very carefully. By special attention I mean things like flirting, giving gifts, one-on-one time together and certainly physical interaction. Sometimes it is just fun to flirt and get attention from lots of members of the opposite sex. But this could be quite hard on people who take the flirting seriously. Pointing one another to Christ first is the goal so for a guy or a girl to try to do things just to get attention for themselves can be quite selfish. Honoring someone of the opposite sex that you are interested in should center as much as possible on being a servant who seeks to encourage their faith. That may actually mean spending less time with them and being careful to let them have time with various other friends. And as you are getting to know each other, you may want to take your time in sharing personal things. Do fun activities together and in groups and slowly connect over time, not all at once.

How far is too far?

This is a super common and good question, but the question itself could be a problem if rooted in selfishness. Many times this question is about how much I can do for ME that will make ME happy without getting ME in trouble. But what if the question could be switched around. How can I best honor my girlfriend or boyfriend when it comes to our physical relationship? As we noted above, sex is powerful. In the same way that a small match needs to be handled wisely because it can lead to a huge forest fire, understanding the power of even just holding hands, hugging and kissing is important. When I was dating my wife, Heather, we had both seen how powerful even those things could be so we took it slow. We wanted to focus on getting to know each other and knew that the more we got involved physically the less we might connect in other ways. Plus, we knew we didn't want to have sex unless we got married. So we waited until our

five month anniversary and I gave Heather a card with my hand print on it to let her know I wanted to hold her hand for the first time. Then we waited until our engagement day for our first kiss. These were both choices we made that helped us focus more on honoring each other and not just on selfishly getting pleasure from the other person. I don't propose those specific things to everyone, but share them to encourage everyone to consider carefully the ways you want to honor each other.

I will suggest that you recognize that things like French kissing, petting/fondling genitals, removing clothes and laying down together are all part of foreplay. Foreplay is designed to help our bodies get ready to have sex so as you seek to honor God and others by saving sex for marriage we suggest four guidelines.

1. Tongue in (no French kissing)
2. Clothes on
3. Hands off (no petting)
4. Four on the floor (no lying down together).

Is oral sex, sex?

Again I go back to the possible selfishness in this question. Some would argue for "technical virginity" if they only have oral sex. But the reality is there is not much difference physically between oral sex and intercourse and the emotional bonds are certainly still there. This is a form of sex that is designed to be enjoyed (if both partners agree to it) in marriage. Outside of marriage it can be used to avoid sexually transmitted diseases (some of which could still be contracted) or maintain technical virginity or for a quick sexual encounter. None of these things seem to have honoring one another as the primary goal. Don't be fooled by the idea of "technical virginity". Oral sex is something that will be best enjoyed in the context of a marriage covenant.

What should I do about all the pornography that is out there?

This is a great question because learning to deal with pornography is very much about learning to honor God, others and ourselves. Pornography creates a false reality where sex is played out on a screen that creates a fantasy world that cannot be attained in reality. It is sex without relationship, which is not at all how God designed it to be enjoyed. Sadly, it is also highly addictive. Just like a drug, even one viewing of porn will cause you to desire more, most likely. Most pornography addicts, whose marriages and other relationships are deeply wounded or ruined later in life, report that they first started watching porn when they were as young as 10 or 11 years old. It starts as curiosity or even an accidental click or search online, but quickly progresses to more. And even if you don't become addicted, the power of pornography is so great that the images you see will stay with you and hinder your ability to enjoy the beauty of sex as God designed it. One of the best gifts we can give to all our future relationships and especially to a future spouse is to ruthlessly avoid pornography. Some good practices are:

1. No computers in private rooms with doors closed.
2. Always go to homes where parents are around who will also monitor things carefully.
3. Have an adult who checks in regularly to make sure that "accidents" have not happened. If they do, go directly to a trusted adult for support.
4. Consider putting a filter on your computer to help keep you accountable.
5. Know that God can forgive and heal even the worst porn addiction so get help if you are struggling.

Is masturbation wrong?

Masturbation is a natural part of discovering and exploring our sexuality. Most guys masturbate during their teen years and many girls do too. Enjoying our bodies as gifts from God that can one day be shared with someone else is a healthy part of adolescent sexuality. The challenge with masturbation is that it is often accompanied by sexual fantasy (i.e. lustfully thinking about the opposite sex). It can also be a key part of viewing pornography either as something that makes you want to get involved with porn, or as something that accompanies your porn addiction. Because it can become quite an addiction as well, it is wise to limit it and be honest about the ways in which it can often be a selfish activity. Talking to a trusted adult about any struggles you have with masturbation could be really helpful and is quite wise.

What are they and how do I avoid getting an STD?

Sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) are rampant in our culture. They are transmitted primarily through sexual intercourse, but some can be transmitted without penetration. Teens used to simply fear pregnancy when they were sexually active, but now the reality is that sex before marriage can be deadly. At best STD's cause genital discomfort that can be dealt with through medication. At worst STD's can be incurable diseases you will pass on to your spouse, could cause infertility or could lead to death. Birth control does not guarantee protection. Abstinence is the only guaranteed protection. God isn't just being mean in telling us to wait for marriage to have sex. Along with all the other good things we've talked about, He is also protecting us and our future spouse from serious consequences that have developed as a result of people misusing and abusing sex.

What is sex in marriage like?

Sex in marriage is a wonderful opportunity to honor God's good gift of getting to be fruitful and multiply, enjoy personal pleasure and offer love to your partner. That being said, the way sex looks in movies and on television shows is not a very helpful depiction and can often set up unhealthy expectations. Sex is designed to be a literal explosion (orgasm) of the various forms of love that make up a marriage. Under the safe umbrella of your covenant love commitment and with the foundation of your friendship and affection for one another, sexual love can thrive and be a rich expression of the fullness of all your love for each other. But all of this love must be nurtured and developed. You won't be nearly as good at loving each other in your first year as you will be after 10, 20 and 30 years. So the whole idea of meeting someone in a bar and heading up to a hotel room minutes later for passionate sex is not about love, but rather just lust. Lust can create a quick high, but will also leave our hearts damaged. True lovemaking, like any other skill, will take work, practice, getting back up after failing and much grace with yourself and each other to figure it out. But sex in the context of a loving marriage is rich, lasting and heart-filling!

Getting more practical, some couples struggle to even figure out sex early on. Heather and I took a number of days on our honeymoon and we know other couples who have taken months to get started with full intercourse. That is okay, sex is not just about being selfish, it is about serving each other and creating a safe place for both partners to be naked and not ashamed.

Once things get going, sex is something newlyweds often like to enjoy quite frequently. I had one friend who had sex every day for the first two months of his marriage. As I said, sex early on may not be the best you'll ever have, but it is fun to start practicing and getting better at it.

As couples get busy with work or with having kids it can be hard to keep up with your sexual intimacy, but again, it is worth making it a priority. So you may need to schedule time for it. But beyond just scheduling certain times, you'll also want to keep romance

alive through regularly kissing, hugging, sending romantic texts and notes, planning dates and getting away for weekends together.

There are many wonderful ways to enjoy sex and, when the time is right, I hope you can delight in great sex for many, many years. You can start preparing now as you learn to honor God, yourself and others well. But the ultimate goal in life is not to have sex, as appealing and enticing as it may seem, especially in your teenage years. The real goal is to enjoy a deep, lasting relationship with Christ that will guide and shape connections with others and give you a vision for how to live out God's many joy-filled purposes for your life!

Conclusion

The above questions and answers are not exhaustive by any means. There are many books that go much further in to detail. I will include a few below. My hope is the material above will simply get the conversation started. For parents and youth leaders, I hope this guide can help you gather your own thoughts on these issues and have a sense of what teens might be wondering or needing to know. For students, I'm hopeful that by going through these various topics and inviting their thoughts as you share your own, a safe place will develop where they can talk freely about their faith and how it affects their sexuality. It makes me angry sometimes when I think about the ways that our world has made sex so dirty and perverted. But it excites me to think about the chance we have as a community to reclaim the beauty of sex for the next generation. Many blessings as you undertake this rich discipling opportunity!

Suggested Resources

For Parents

Teaching Your Children's Healthy Sexuality by Jim Burns

A quick read, written by a long-time youth and family ministry expert. It is designed to accompany four books you would read to your kids as they grow up to help teach them about sex.

How and When to Tell Your Kids About Sex by Stan and Brenna Jones

A longer read, but quite comprehensive and organized so you can just read the pertinent sections when needed. This would probably be my first choice as a reference book, though it is slightly dated.

The Talks by Barrett Johnson

A newer book that takes a similar approach to what I did above, though offers much more reading.

Intimacy Ignited by Dillow and Pintus

This is a great book to help ignite couples in their own sexual relationship. The best way to teach the next generation is to model great sex for them.

The Gift of Sex by Clifford and Joyce Penner

This is the sex bible pretty much. It covers almost everything a couple would need to know to develop a healthy sexual relationship. The Penner's have done sex therapy for years and offer many helpful exercises to deal with sexual struggles and enhance your sexual relationship. They've also recently published followed up hers (*Enjoy: The Gift of Pleasure for Women*) and his (*The Married Guy's Guide to Great Sex*) books that are excellent as well.

For Kids/Teens and Parents

There are two series that I have found that seek to walk you through teaching your kids about sex at various ages. The first two books of Pure Foundations are outstanding. But I would suggest the second two of God's Design series might be for older kids. The content of *The Purity Code* is good, but the whole push on purity being an essential code to live by didn't sit well with me.

Pure Foundations Series by Jim Burns

Book 1 (Ages 3-5) – God Made Your Body

Book 2 (Ages 6-9) – How God Makes Babies

Book 3 (Ages 10-14) – The Purity Code

God's Design for Sex Series by Stan and Brenna Jones

Book 1 (Ages 3-5) – The Story of Me

Book 2 (Ages 5-8) – Before I Was Born

Book 3 (Ages 8-11) – What's the Big Deal?

Book 4 (Ages 11-14) – Facing the Facts