

Parenting and Sex Education

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[0 : 00] We've run parenting seminars in the past. I'm convinced that this will be the first one we'll repeat! in terms of the focus of it.

So next year we're going to do this. And I'm thinking what we'll do, Lincoln, if you are open to it next year, to have a practical session where people bring devices and where we actually show how these devices can be monitored and controlled and so forth.

I think that'll be really, really helpful. All right, well, for our last session, I want to begin by asking three main questions.

The first question is this. Should children be taught about sex? Anyone who would say no, don't teach them about sex. OK, so we all agree on that.

So the second question is, who should teach children about sex? Should it be the parents? Should it be the state? Should it be the state? Through the education system? Or some combination of both?

[1 : 06] Who would say the parents alone? Who would say the parents alone? The parents alone, OK? We got three there for the parents alone. Who would say four for the parents alone?

Any? Seems like that's a popular position now. You got another one? OK, all the parents alone. Let me see. Let me see a show of hands. One, two, three, four, five, six.

And this is increasing. Hold a second. One. But I'm way up. Way, way up. No half voting. Full voting. Parents alone. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten.

All right. Did you, were you voting back there? The little guy, no. OK, so 10, 10, 11. That was 10. 10 for parents alone.

Who would say a combination of the two? The state or through the education system and the parents. So one, two, three, four. You guys are numbered. Yeah, there are some who say the parents alone should teach it.

[2 : 08] But I think those who said that would also agree that the reality is that that's not very likely. Because as you heard, you have content providers who are teaching sex education.

As they live this life, they're going to be observing and learning in all kinds of different ways. So there is no way for parents alone to teach sex education. But there is certainly a way for parents to teach sex education in a very intentional way with their children.

And I think that parents, more than the state, even more than the accidental ways that they learn about sex, parents have that unique opportunity to really teach their children about sex, more than all the other forms.

They're with us, you know, from birth. And we have a lot of opportunities to do that. But we have to be intentional about it. And then the third question, last question. What should we be taught? What should we be taught about sex?

Should they be taught about sex from a biological point of view? Should they be taught to have sex? Safe sex, as is being called in our community.

[3 : 28] You may drive around the island. You'll see this sign that says thousands of young people are choosing to wait. How many of you have seen that sign? I would love to ask the person who made that sign.

Wait until when? Wait until when? And generally the answer will be, until you're ready. Not until marriage, but until you're ready.

Should sex education that is taught be normal sexuality? Should it include heterosexual sex education? Or should it include what is being called now comprehensive sex education, which the lady who made a comment very early on in the seminar alluded to?

There are a lot of great books, some of which we will recommend, that you can get to help you in this task. So the first thing I want to say as we look now specifically at what sex education is, I want you to think of a triangle.

And actually, I have one posted that you can actually see it. And so with this triangle, you see this circle in the middle. And this is a picture I want you to visualize as I talk through these aspects of sex education.

Visualize and notice that the triangle, the circle in the middle touches to the sides, the three sides of that triangle.

[10:50] And what I'd like us to think about is that in that circle, in that circle is God and the biblical revelation of human sexuality.

That's the biblical information about human sexuality. And then, this is the way I would think about it, but you can certainly do it a little different. The second one, I would say, is the biological information about human sexuality.

You can put it on either side of the triangle. And then number three, the practical information about human sexuality. On another side.

And then the legal information about human sexuality. In my view, the way I would put it, if we can go back to the triangle for a second, please, Clarence.

The way I would like to think about it is, I would, with God and the biblical view of human sexuality in the middle, I would then put the biological on the bottom.

[12:04] And then the practical and the legal, like on the sides of it. But I think the biological on the bottom gives the idea of something that is foundational, something that is fixed, something that isn't kind of shifting around, something that actually is supposed to support the other two.

The other two are supposed to come out of that biological revelation that God has given to us about human sexuality.

Now, here's some things to keep in mind. Ideally, teaching sex education should be gender-specific.

Should be. I know a lot of times that's not possible. Sometimes moms have to teach boys about sex, and sometimes fathers have to teach daughters about sex.

But I think the ideal is it should be gender-specific. Now, there may be particular aspects and moments where there is some coordination and some collaboration in terms of the discussions.

[13:17] But largely speaking, by and large, it should be gender-specific. Then, second, it should also be age-appropriate.

Sex education is not once and for, let's have this talk and be done with it, and I don't want to talk about this again in my life with you. It isn't that.

It is to be over time and in an age-appropriate manner, and you will, if you do it properly, you will revisit components of sex education with your children as the years go by.

I mean, truthfully, even after your children become adults, there are particular ways that you may be engaging with them about the whole topic of sex in the environment that they now find themselves in.

Questions are the most natural way to talk about human sexuality. So, for example, it's far better for a child to, a little child, to maybe come and say, well, mommy, what is sex?

[14:27] Or daddy, what is sex? Or where do babies come from? And then you can have an age-appropriate response to that child.

But then also be aware that some children don't ask questions. And you want to be thinking about how and when and where you may be able to broach the issue, you may be able to initiate that conversation.

So for a young child who may not be asking questions, you're thinking the child should be asking some questions by now, you may say to the child, have you ever wondered where babies come from?

And depending on what the child says, you may further respond. And it's fine for a young child to simply say, babies come from God, because they do. They do.

Babies come from God. And to be able to say to them, God gives mommy and daddy babies. For a young child.

[15:27] And that may be sufficient. The child runs off and he's happy. Babies come from God. And then that conversation will obviously grow. Either you initiated or the child comes back and say,

you told me babies come from God.

And I saw a baby in the hospital. A baby came from the hospital. And then you may have that conversation further. Remember that the whole idea is to give information to the child, but not shock the child into curiosity or even into embarrassment.

You don't want to do that. Dr. James Dobson, who is the leading psychologist, he says that the goal of parenting in the area of sex education is we should seek to try to be completed, talking about foundational human sexuality, by the time as a child is entering into puberty.

And for girls, that is somewhere in the range of 10 to 13. And for boys, 11 to 14.

So that's not the time to start to talk about it. That's the time that we need to be aiming to be finishing off from a foundational level, talking with them about human sexuality.

[16:48] Again, that's not telling them everything. But that's telling them sufficient. And then you begin to build on that as time goes by.

So you need to teach them enough that they would sufficiently understand human sexuality biblically. They would understand it biologically. They would understand it practically.

And they'd also understand it legally. And then you can have this growing conversation as time goes on. So let's talk about these four components. And then hopefully we'll have some time for questions and answers.

First, biblically. Teach them about sex biblically. Begin with the biblical revelation in Genesis. God created men and women, males and females, and he created them to complement one another.

God gave men and women the ability to be attracted to one another and to love one another.

[17:55] The relationship that a man and a woman enter into as a result of their love is marriage. The man becomes the husband. The woman becomes the wife.

And they leave their parents' home. And they start their own home and their own family. And God created the gift of sex to produce children and as a way for husbands and wives to enjoy and celebrate their love for one another.

I mean, in a nutshell, that is the biblical revelation of human sexuality. Now, depending on the age of the child, depending on the constitution of the child, that conversation is going to go in all kinds of different directions.

And here again, as a parent, you have to measure it. You have to be wise. And sometimes it's fine to say to a child, we'll talk about that another time. Now, you can't delay that forever.

But some children may ask a question that is beyond what you as a parent believe you should be explaining to them at this particular point. But human sexuality doesn't have to be anything shocking.

[19:10] It is simply the biblical revelation. That is the biblical revelation. God created men and women to be compliments of one another and to love one another and to be able to produce children and to celebrate their love with the gift of sex.

And reminding our children that sex is a gift to be enjoyed within the context of marriage. Now, at some point, we have to talk to them about the fall.

I mean, that's the ideal that we just talked about. But we have to talk to them about how Adam and Eve rebelled against God, how sin came into the world. And as a result, we have become fallen.

We've become broken people living in a fallen and a broken world. And everything was affected, including sex. Sex is broken.

Love between a man and a woman, a husband and a wife, all of that is now broken because of sin. Sin has changed everything. And so, we end up talking with our children now with things like the realities of sex outside of marriage.

[20:29] God intended it to be in marriage. It's now outside of marriage in many cases. Children then being born outside of marriage. Homosexuality, gender confusion, all of these are aspects and elements of broken sexuality.

And in age-appropriate ways, in ways that a child can ask for more information as opposed to volunteering it. And see, that's one of the keys, I would say.

I think that's one of the odds of talking to your children about sex education. Let it be that they're asking for information more than you volunteering information. You don't want to be jumping ahead of where they necessarily are and the amount of information that they need to have.

And again, if we remember that this is not necessarily a sprint, but a marathon, this is an ongoing conversation, we are able to manage content and respond as they are requesting more information

or as we realize time is going by, they're not asking for it, so I need to actually serve them with this information.

I think it's also important when we talk about how human sexuality has become broken, that we talk about the consequences of not following God's design.

[21 : 56] The blessings associated with it, but also the consequences of not following it. there's just no way around it.

But bottom line, we have to be able to firmly and squarely teach the biblical revelation about human sexuality.

So that is where we start. That is the center of everything. If we don't get that right, we're going to miss on the other parts of it. So we need to get that right. You know, we were on a talk show the other day and someone called in and asked, you know, whether, you know, do you think people are born homosexuals or not?

That is not something that you begin to talk about in terms of the biblical revelation of human sexuality. It is a reality that people face for whatever reason.

I don't think that there's anyone who could say I was born this way because, how do we know? How do we know? We were a little baby and we never were conscious about those particular things.

[23 : 09] But, what we can say is it is a part of broken human sexuality. It's broken. It's not the norm. It's broken. but, there's nothing in the biblical revelation of human sexuality that legitimizes anything other than heterosexual, sexual relations within the boundaries of marriage.

Everything else is, truthfully, everything else in Leviticus 18, the Lord abominates everything else. Not just homosexuality, but also adultery, also fornication, also incest.

So, we begin with the biblical revelation and we acknowledge the fallenness around it and we talk with our children about that. The blessing comes to us when we follow God's design.

When we don't, we end up with a lot of pain and a lot of difficult consequences to live with. Second, teach them about sex biologically.

This starts with teaching body parts. Personally, I don't believe that a good way to teach our children about sex biologically is to have boys and girls calling their genitals by other names other than the formal names.

[24 : 29] A penis for the boy and a vagina for the girl. And of course, I'm not saying you tell your two-year-old that, but certainly as children are growing and, you know, it's so hard to say four or five or six.

I mean, it could vary, but certainly when they need to be referring to their penis or their vagina, you need to give them those words as opposed to some other word because this is all a part of teaching them healthy human sexuality.

sexuality. And I think in this room, many of us could probably reference things that we are aware of, whether we were raised that way or we know other people were raised that way, where the biological part of sex was almost taught as something dirty, something unclean, something to be ashamed about, and it really ought not be.

we should teach children that private parts, they are private parts, and that no one should touch their private parts.

And we should also talk with them about what is appropriate in terms of people touching them, that no one should touch them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable, even if it's not a private part.

[25 : 45] we should talk with them about not undressing around other people, that nakedness is something that is to be private and not to be undressing around other people.

And here, we in our homes can set our own examples for our children. If you're walking around your home in underwear or naked or barely clothed, you're setting a poor example for your children.

And they should be taught that nakedness is to be covered. That's why God gave us clothing.

Clothing is not to expose, it's to cover, it is to conceal.

And we should teach our children those kinds of things. When we are talking about the biological part of sex education, we should also talk with our children about interactions and what are healthy interactions with siblings and cousins.

And very practical things like not allowing children to be in secluded parts of the house or with doors closed or being unsupervised. Because the reality is children will experiment.

[26 : 56] We have experimented. And we can certainly incorporate our own experiences as we raise our children, as we talk with them about sex.

Remember, we are living in perhaps the most over-sexualized time in the world. Not necessarily that people are more sexual than others, but it's always right in front of us.

You turn on the television, it's there. You open the newspaper, it's there. You walk the streets, it's there. It's all around. The internet is feeding it to us almost 24-7. And so we just have to be aware that because they are being sexualized and taught about sex, not just from your instruction, and most of that other stuff is bad, you want to just make sure that they're not falling into any kinds of experimentation, especially where you can help it by just common sense things you can do in the home.

Now the good news about teaching sex from a biological point of view is that there are a lot of age appropriate books from a Christian perspective, and certainly from other perspectives as well, but we don't advocate those other ones, that you can access.

For example, a very basic one, *Where Do Babies Come From?* designed for girls ages six to eight. *God's Design for Sex*.

[28 : 36] There's some other age appropriate ones. *How Are You Changing for Girls*, nine to eleven. *How Are You Changing for Boys*, nine to eleven. *Sex and the New You for Girls*, 12 to 14.

Sex and the New You for Boys, 12 to 14. And then *Love, Sex, and God for Young Women*, ages 14 and up, revised and updated.

One of the good things about these books, the earlier ones are written in such a way that you as a parent can sit and just read it as a story to your children.

So this first one I mentioned is like 32 pages and has big pictures and so on like that. As the children get old and they're able to read, these are books you can put in their hands and have an ongoing conversation with them about the book.

So you're kind of like reading the book together and you're tracking and journeying with them. So there's a lot of help in that particular area of teaching sex biologically. And then number three, teach them about sex practically.

[29 : 45] And this is simply talking with them about sex in an open, age-appropriate manner. Again, Christian books here are very helpful.

But for example, girls should be told that women should be told that women give more in sexual relations than men do.

That's a practical reality. And talking with a young girl, this is one of the ways that you can help her to leverage the peer pressure and all the other kinds of things, the sweet talking guy and all the other people who try to get it going in the wrong direction, say, listen, you give more than that guy will give.

And when you think about it, I have never heard in my life of girls walking around and bragging about the boys they slept with.

Never. bragging about the girls and I can tell you far too many times I've heard guys doing it, bragging about the girls that they slept with because a woman gives herself to a man in sexual relations.

[31 : 04] This is a practical reality that girls in particular need to hear, to understand. You give yourself away. You're sharing yourself with the person.

You sleep with some guy and you're walking in the mall, who you think is going to be more ashamed if the other one's whispering with their friends. He's not going to be ashamed if you're whispering to your friends, but you may be ashamed because you don't know what he's telling his friends.

Girls should be told that women can get pregnant. And all of us, I'm sure, have seen it where in school, a young lady gets pregnant for a guy, she is to drop out, he continues his education. women, because of the biology that God has given to them, women are more likely to get STDs than men. Far more likely that it would happen.

Girls should be told, it's not just not sleeping with the guy, it is also protecting your body. Don't let guys touch over you and feel over you doing whatever they want to do.

[32 : 17] Talk to them in these practical ways. And then we need to talk to boys about how they treat girls. I remember doing a talk, and I've done this at a couple of different schools, but I would ask young boys, talking with them, I'd say, how many of you want to marry a virgin when you get

married?

Every hand goes up. And I would say, and how many of you commit to being a virgin until you get married? no, boy, I, not me, but no, I, into that.

So I said to them, so what you're basically saying is that you want guys who come into contact with your future wife to deal with her in such a way that when she comes to you, she's a virgin.

But you're not making the same commitment to the women you come in contact with, who will be somebody else's wife, that they will be a virgin. So you want people to do for you what you refuse to do for them.

And so it's important to talk with them about these kinds of things. Talk with them about how would you want someone to treat your sister when your sister goes out with them.

[33 : 44] Would you want someone to take advantage of your sister? Are you willing to treat other girls exactly the same way you would want your sister to be treated?

We need to talk to boys about protecting girls, protecting them, not exploiting them, not disrespecting them, but protecting them.

We need to talk to boys about the fact that, especially when they are in the area of puberty beyond 12, 13, to say to them, you realize that if a woman says that she was raped by a man to whom she's not married, and there's evidence that sexual contact did take place, do you know that the law gives the benefit of the doubt to that woman more than to you?

Because that's not your wife. And there's only one place that your sperm should be, and that is in your wife, not to someone you're not married to. So immediately the law gives the benefit of the doubt, not necessarily from a legal point of view in court, because in court the accused gets the benefit of the doubt, but if a woman goes to the police station and says, this man has raped me, I've gone to the crisis center and here's the evidence, and they're able to prove sexual contact, but immediately the police are not going to say, this is your girlfriend, did you all decide?

No, that's not for them to decide. You're going to be charged, and a court will decide whether the woman is lying or not. I mean, these are realities, practical realities that we need to talk with boys about.

[35 : 33] same thing with touching. When you touch a person without that person's permission, you've committed an assault. And if you do it in a sexual way, you've committed sexual assault.

And so we have to talk with them about these kinds of things in a very practical way. We should talk to our children about avoiding situations that could lead to sexual sin and help them to know sex is a beautiful thing.

And in the book of the Song of Solomon, there's this refrain in there that you don't turn love on before the time. And the reason for that is when love turns on, it's not supposed to be turned off. But if you're not married and you're playing around, what you're doing is you're turning on the water and trying to turn it off. But it's not designed to go that way.

It's designed to turn on and stay on. And so the writer of the Song of Solomon would say, you don't turn love on before the time.

[36 : 38] And so we talk with them about avoiding situations that could lead to sexual sin, avoiding being alone with members of the opposite sex, avoid going to a person's home when parents are not home.

You want to be wise and not put yourself in those kinds of situations. situations. Okay, fourth and finally, we need to talk with them about sex legally.

I've already touched on some of this already, but it breaks my heart that in this country, and not just in this country, in the wider Caribbean in particular, we allow 16-year-olds to have sex.

in the United States, in most of the states, the age is 18. And I'll never forget when my daughter, my oldest, when she turned 16, I could never, I mean, I could never forget looking at it and thinking, and the government says, you could have sex at 16, and there's nothing I could do about it.

It was just, it was surreal. I knew it, but it never came home to me until I looked at my little girl. And the government says, you can go have sex, and it's legal.

[38 : 09] The age for homosexual sex is 18, and frankly, at least it should be 18. But you know, it's interesting, if you were to Google, like, Muslim countries, you know the age of, of sex, sexual relations is, and like, I think the Saudi Arabia in particular I looked at some years ago, you know the ages?

Marriage. And it should be. And it should be. For them, it's not an age as much as a stage.

When you come to the stage of marriage, that's legitimate context for sex. Not because you turn some magical age now, you can go out and have sex. But we should talk with them about sexual abuse in particular.

When a child turns 16, for example, that child can be charged before the courts if that child has sexual relations or touches a child younger than 16 in an inappropriate way.

So this whole thing about a lot of guys, they're 16 and their girlfriend is 14 and 15 and all that stuff, be aware of that. A very, very serious situation.

[39 : 36] Of course, the way the law is written, the attorney general's office has to get involved up until the child is younger than 21 before a charge will be put forward.

but that child is legally responsible before the law when he or she turns 16. We should also help them to know that in this age of social media possessing pornographic pictures, and generally it's not that they're into child pornography, but they could just have a picture of an underage child who may be a friend or who may be in the school.

And it's not that they're going around getting pornography, but if they have the picture, they've violated the law. And so we want to talk with them about it. Keno was talking a while ago about things that children do in groups and how they share content, sending them back and forth, tagging one another.

And a lot of times these things are being passed around. And I can tell you that only a fraction of the infractions go before the courts. Most of it just floats around and it's happening.

and people are getting away with it. And when people get away with things, they think it's okay, they think it's legal, but it's not. Taking pictures of people, taking nude pictures of people and posting them on the internet, that is a crime.

[41 : 03] And so we need to talk with our children about this. One of the things we need to say to our children as well is the older children.

The older you get, the more responsible you are before the law. And I think this is so important to say to our children, you know, trouble is easy to get in, but oh, it's hard to get out.

You could take all of your life to build your life and in one moment destroy it. And so we have to have these kinds of sober conversations with our children.

children. I mean, when you think about it, a lot of people don't realize, I would be driving and I'd be, you know, looking around and I'd see these young girls. And they're pregnant and it's evident they're not married.

I'm thinking, I wonder if this girl realized, obviously, unprotected sex. You're taking your life in your hand. There still is no cure for AIDS.

[42 : 05] There still is none. And many of them are taking these chances. And what they're doing is they're obviously sleeping with people they believe are healthy. And we all know that not every sick person appears sick.

Nobody sleeps with the person who you believe is sick. And so they're taking these chances. We just need to talk with them and have these ongoing discussions about these realities.

from a legal point of view. So why do we do this? One, we should do this because first we want to glorify the Lord.

That is the goal. I said earlier how parenting will bring you to your knees if you commit to it.

I mean, if you are just indifferent and you are physically present but absent as a parent, well, you're just indifferent. If you're going to get engaged, you'll come to your wits end to realize I can't change my children's hearts.

[43 : 11] Only God can do that. But we also have to come to the place where we're not trying to live our lives through our children. A lot of times we can do that.

We can try to live our lives through our children. children. And that puts pressure on them. That puts pressure on us. But we need to be parenting for the glory of God instead of for our own reasons and benefit.

And then the last thing I would say is that one day we will all give an account for the children that God has entrusted to us. All right. That's all I have. It's 1.30.

Any questions? And I thought this would be the session with the most questions.

Any questions and all that? You mentioned should a child Yeah, we want to record the questions for the benefit of those who are listening.

[44 : 15] You mentioned that you give us three questions. Should a child be taught about sex? Who should teach a child about sex? And what should children be taught?

I think you missed a very important one. Okay. At what age should I teach a child about sex? Okay. Well, I did address that in the sense that you want to start with allowing questions to come.

So allow the child to raise questions. questions. But if the child does not raise questions, you need to be aware so that you may be able to introduce it in terms of I gave the example, you may say, have you ever wondered where babies come from?

And then there may be an opportunity to begin to open that up. So there's no hard and fast rule to say when a child turns four or five, you teach them about sex. Generally speaking, children will ask questions.

So for example, let's say that a baby is born in the house and you have a younger child. Generally speaking, questions are going to come up about that baby.

[45 : 27] And this is following Dr. James Dobson's approach. His approach is that it is best to allow a child to raise questions. But if the child doesn't raise questions, as a wise observant parent who's seeing the child not raising questions, you want to think about how can I begin to broach this subject and introduce it in an age-appropriate manner.

You don't want to shock the daylights out of them about sex, but you want to talk to them about biblical sexuality. And that's where we start. We start with the biblical revelation of what God has said about sex.

There's nothing unclean about that. It's a gift from God. It's to be enjoyed in marriage. And then you go beyond that in the biological part as the child matures.

But remember, this is an ongoing conversation. So it's not, I talk about the biblical part and never talk about that again. You may be having to emphasize that even more with your older children to say, remember, sex is for marriage.

Sex isn't until you turn 19 or 18. Sex is for marriage. So we will always be coming back to these conversations. We'll always be coming back to it.

[46 : 38] So what you need to do again is you need to allow the questions to naturally come. But if they do not come, you need to decide when you're going to introduce some content.

But remember, the goal is you want to be finished when that child is, I mean, I say finished, not finished and absolutely finished, but finished in a foundational way when that child is reaching puberty.

you don't want to be starting to talk about it because then they're awkward and there's a lot of information and sometimes they have data that they've already acquired that you're trying to maybe contradict. So is that helpful?

Okay. Any other questions? more. My question is, at what age do you talk to them about their body parts?

Because we have a seven-year-old and he came to me the other day and he's like, Mommy, my penis looks like you're getting longer.

[47 : 42] So I'm like, okay. So then at least you've told him that. You told him that he's a penis penis. And let me ask you, how did you respond to him when he said that? I actually didn't know what to say.

You know, a very simple response to him is, yeah, that happens as you grow. That happens as you grow, as you grow, you get older, and you become a man, that happens as you grow.

And that will probably satisfy him right there. So it's not like you have to try to be very graphic or a very difficult thing.

That's a natural thing. You're going to grow, and your body parts grow as you also grow. Anyone else?

No? All right. Well, thanks for coming. Thanks for your patience. We ran later than we had planned. But as I said, we're going to follow up with an email.

[48 : 44] We'll send you the links to the recordings. We will also provide you with the PowerPoints that were used, and we'll also give you a resource page where you'll have all the resources we've talked about, and in addition to some other ones.

Before we go, I want to just make you aware of another course that we're running here at the church. It's called Christianity Explored. It's a course that takes you to the Gospel of Mark over seven weeks.

And if you've never read one of the Gospels, I encourage you to consider attending Christianity Explored. And if you are interested or maybe you just want to grow in your understanding of who Jesus is and why he came and what it means to follow him, if you complete, you should have gotten one of these response cards.

If you complete this and just turn it in the information table at the back, we would get you signed up for that course. All right, well, let's stand and let's close our time.