

4 Reasons You Must Talk to Your Kids About 'Fifty Shades of Grey'

With the *Fifty Shades of Grey* movie releasing soon (a worldwide release date of Feb. 13), our culture is ablaze with controversy and debate over sexual issues once again. But this one is a little different than controversies of the past. *Fifty Shades* takes pornography—particularly a violent and abusive form of sex—and glorifies it. People (women in particular) are falling for it on an alarming scale. Even Christians are succumbing to the enticement of *Fifty Shades*. In short, it and the topic of BDSM are in our faces now like never before.

“BDSM is an acronym for Bondage, Dominance, Sadism and Masochism. In psychiatry, the terms sadism and masochism describe a personality type characterized by a person deriving pleasure and gratification from inflicting physical pain and humiliation. The terms specifically refer to one who either enjoys giving pain (sadist) or one who enjoys receiving pain (masochist).” This definition is from Pulling Back the Shades by Dannah Gresh and Dr. Juli Slattery.

And guess what: It's going to have consequences on your children and how they view sex. The more our team has ministered this year, speaking to parents and teens in various nations, we have come to the conclusion that parents HAVE to talk to their children about *Fifty Shades*. As in yesterday. Here's why:

- 1. Your kids are curious.**

It would be unfair and naive of parents to assume their teens haven't noticed the *Fifty Shades* phenomenon. It is literally everywhere. And with the movie releasing before Valentine's Day, the hype has only increased. If your teenager doesn't know what the plot is about already, I guarantee he or she is curious. Use this to your advantage, parents. Answer their questions, let them know they're not alone if they don't know what BDSM is, and communicate your willingness to help them understand.

2. If you don't, someone else will.

Where do your kids turn when they have questions about sex? Do they know they can come to you? If they don't feel like they can come to you, your kids will turn elsewhere to have their questions answered. What kind of information will they find on Google or from their peers? I realize I probably just scared the pants off of you with that question. Take a deep breath, Mom and Dad. It's going to be OK. But you do have reason to be concerned here. The only way to guarantee your kids get the right message about *Fifty Shades* is if you craft that message. Despite popular opinion, parents are the BEST people to talk to teenagers about sexual issues. I promise you. All the research done on the subject and our experience in ministry—both with parents and teens—attests to this statement. You are it, Mom and Dad. Don't miss your God-given chance. (Also—if your palms are sweating at the idea of having to come up with a conversation about *Fifty Shades*, don't panic. I've included some links below to articles and videos you can use to educate yourself and also share with your teens. You are not alone and you don't have to re-invent the wheel, either!)

3. It's an excellent opportunity.

Parents, if you feel like you've missed the boat on talking to your teen about sex, now's your chance. I know it may seem odd to view the situation this way, but trust me—another ship has

arrived and you need to jump on it! The issue of sex and abusive relationships is in our face in a huge way right now. Our team is claiming this promise from Scripture over the *Fifty Shades* phenomenon: What the enemy intended for evil, God is going to use for good (Gen. 50:20). Seriously—all the hype over *Fifty Shades* could potentially turn into a huge blessing in the way of parents talking to their teens—perhaps for the first time—about sex and, more importantly, communicating God’s perspective on sex.

4. This is just the beginning.

I have a sinking feeling that the *Fifty Shades* phenomenon is just the beginning of abusive sexual relationships and erotica going mainstream and becoming more and more culturally acceptable. I hope and pray this is not the case, but if history is any indication, I fear we have a very big battle ahead of us on yet another sexual issue culture is trying to push the envelope on. Don’t miss your chance to talk to your teenager about healthy, life-giving sexuality. The best antidote to the enemy’s view of sex so prevalent in our culture is to communicate regularly to our teenagers God’s view of sex and marriage. The truth is God designed our sexuality to bring life, to honor Him and to fulfill His purpose in us. He did not design it to be harmful or only pleasurable for one party. Furthermore, God’s view of sex is not anything we should be embarrassed of or fearful about. We should feel the freedom to talk about it with our teenagers and not let the enemy silence us on this very important topic.

So where do you start?

Listed below are videos and articles our team has found very helpful to educate yourself, and perhaps even share with your teens as you talk about this issue:

– 50 things you should know about 50 shades video by Covenant

Eyes (great video for parents to educate themselves on the topics the book brings up).

- 4 Lies about Sexuality in 50 Shades of Grey video by Covenant Eyes (we recommend watching this one yourself first and then watching it with your teen).
- Parent Survival Guide to 50 Shades of Grey (5 part blog series) by psychiatrist Miriam Grossman M.D. Her blogs will give you the information you need to address this topic with wisdom, while also inspiring you to use it as an opportunity to communicate about healthy sexuality in general. You might consider sharing some of the information she brings with your teen.
- Pulling Back the Shades by Dannah Gresh and Dr. Juli Slattery–Dannah and Juli have written an excellent resource for women on the topic of erotica. We highly recommend it for mothers and young women who have tussled with things like 50 Shades, or know friends who have.
- Will You See Mr. Grey? blog post by Dannah Gresh–Dannah has written some excellent blog posts on the topic of erotica and 50 Shades and even has an entire website dedicated to the topic.

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