

How to Have 'The Talk' With Your Son

I want us to break into the world of your teenage son for a moment. You remember the feelings of "Wow, most girls are attractive; what does that mean? Am I weird or strange because now I have all these new feelings around girls?"

In your son's world, it's much worse than we ever had it growing up. They have as many as 15-17 sexual innuendos per hour of prime-time TV. Many have over 100 channels to choose from right in their house that provides sexual images all the time. Then there is the onslaught of pornography that we could have never been exposed to. The internet alone provides more free pictures than the largest porn shop in the country ever has had.

Growing up is extremely different than years ago. Research shows us that most of their ideas about sex come from popular culture, not the church or even more importantly, their father.

As I travel around the country doing men and marriage conferences I frequently ask the men, "How many of you have had more than a three-minute sex talk with your dads"? Raise your hands. Rarely will the number of hands raised exceed 3 percent of the men. That means over 97 percent of men in the church were not told much of anything if anything at all about sex. I remember my stepdad trying to talk to me about sex. Our conversation lasted less than 30 seconds.

That brings up the question of when should we talk to our sons. This is somewhat different for every boy. Like shaving, they all get there at different times. Generally by age 13-14, though, you need to sit down and have that conversation with your son.

The next question I hear men ask is, "What do I say, after all my dad didn't say anything to me"? I have found that any area I am responsible for, but ignorant in, I have choices: 1) Get informed or 2) Pay an expert. Unfortunately, this is really your area of responsibility, so if you need equipping, visit our website.

In our generation we need to break this male curse of sexual silence. Our sons yearn for current information from a reliable source. They need real information from a godly perspective, preferably from you. For too long, the church's sons have been totally isolated during their sexual development, having to lean on the world for their sex education.

Many of the men I treat with sexual addictions have never had any sex talk from their fathers. We can change the course of our son's sexual destination when we get the courage to talk to our sons about sexuality. It is not the youth pastor's job to talk to your sons; it's yours. So, let's cover a few things to help you with this task of shepherding you sons sexually.

The first thing is shifting paradigms from having "the talk" which seems to refer to a one-time experience to a shepherding or discipleship. One sex talk will not equip our sons but an ongoing dialogue about his sexuality, just like an ongoing talk about finances, is a lifelong discipleship.

Make the first discussion, reading a book and so forth a special time with Dad. Some men have taken their son away for the weekend just to do this introduction into the dialogue about sexuality.

Next, paradigm this to your son as part of "becoming a man" and how God is growing him up, and communicate God's perspective on sexuality as you understand it. The topics that need to be covered are more than thou shalt-not. If you focus just on what he can't do, he will think sex is just external

and as long as I don't touch, I'm OK. This sets him up to give permission to lust, since the two of you didn't discuss it. But you can't expect your son to know what to ask about his internal sexuality.

Definitely cover some of the issues of sexually transmitted diseases tactfully. Never forget to talk about the risk and responsibility of pregnancy. This should also include how "not safe" condoms really are. I tell teens the only safe sex is no sex.

If you need some real resources there is *Born for War or Clean*. Also, for your daughters, there is *Princes Take Longer Than Frogs*. You are the only dad and the only sex expert your children have, so be a great one!

Lastly, this is an ongoing father-son issue. As stated earlier, this is not a one-time talk. I encourage men to have a short sex check-in discussion about these issues once a month.

If you start early enough and are consistent, you can help your son be not only sexually secure, but also sexually healthy. Your son is already saying, "Dad, can we talk"? So what's the answer? {eoa}

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