

Your Sexual Legacy

Fathers are ultimately responsible for their sons' sexual development. It takes more than one talk—it takes honesty, courage and positive role-modeling.

Your son looks to you as a model in every area of his life. Have you ever considered whether or not you are modeling healthy sexuality for him?

I have spent countless hours counseling men whose fathers' sexual role-modeling was either absent or, worse still, destructive. The absent role model never discusses sexuality with his son. He doesn't know what to say about it, so he says nothing and hopes for the best.

This Christian role model has to be honest with other adult men about any lust issues in his life. He responsibly blocks the Internet, and he monitors TV and media intake for himself and his family. He is emotionally connected to his son enough so that they can talk about sex. This father is a good, general role model for male sexuality.

I want to state clearly that you are not 100 percent responsible for your son's sexual choices, or your daughter's for that matter. We all have a will, and humans are capable of making bad choices despite having the best information. Adam and Eve had God as a father, and they still erred. You are, however, 100 percent responsible for your role-modeling and for disciplining your son regarding sex.

You will have to decide "when" to start talking based on his age, maturity and current exposure to sexual information. I believe most of this information should be covered by age 14.

Here are topics for conversation:

The mechanics of sex—The concepts and components. Most sex-education books cover all these issues.

Sex and the brain—How the brain is conditioned and connects to what the eyes look at. (My book Sex, Men and God covers this.)

Internal and external sexuality—Go over Exodus 20 with your son and explain the 10th commandment. Do a word study on lust in the Bible.

Sex only in the context of marriage—Refer to the Bible for this one.

Bad women—Explain the dangers of women who want to steal his purity. Refer to the story of Samson, Proverbs 5, Revelation 2 and many others. Some teenage girls are like the women described in these passages; they can scar your son.

Sexually transmitted diseases and their lifelong consequences.

Guidelines for courting or dating—Paul's admonition to treat all women as sisters and what that means (see 1 Tim. 5:1-2).

Dangers of pornography and the Internet—Block open access to the Internet in your home, and know the service providers of your son's friends if he frequents their homes.

Condoms—The lie of safe sex.

Masturbation—I know that as Christian men we all would like to believe our sons will never masturbate. But since the percentage of those in North America who don't is so incredibly small, we have to look at our options.

Your first option is to tell him nothing. This leaves it up to your son to be informed about masturbation by his peers and the media sources of our American culture. Your neglect to say anything can also leave him feeling isolated and thinking he is the only one struggling with this issue.

The second option is to give your son some sexual guidelines, define what is sin in a way he understands, and then hope and pray he will make wise choices. For those who choose the second option, I would suggest that you include a discussion about the following four guidelines for masturbation (please

understand, I am not encouraging masturbation for anyone):

Guideline 1: Frequency

First, suggest limits to your son for the frequency of masturbation. When I am coaching dads, I suggest no more than once or twice a week. This is not to suggest that they do it that often, but to keep it to no more than this.

Why? When I talk to a teenager, I often have to break the news to him that the culture and the media are lying to him when they project that women want sex every day. I explain that if he trains his body (through masturbation) to have sex four to seven times a week, and he does this for years, he will be frustrated in marriage when his wife doesn't meet his developed appetite for daily sex.

Guideline 2: No Porn Or Fantasy

Your son must understand that what he views while masturbating will set up a strong neuropathic desire for that specific object or person. Using pornography or fantasies can also establish beliefs that can become a detriment to how his wife thinks about sex.

Why? If you masturbate to pictures of models (pictures that are airbrushed to make them look perfect and models who often have had numerous plastic surgeries) who are 6-feet-tall redheads, that is what you will chase.

When God gives you a perfectly wonderful, godly woman who is 5-feet-2 inches tall with an average build, you will be unhappy with His gift to you. Don't fantasize about women because the fantasies will be different sexually from the woman you marry. This will aggravate you, and your wife will feel your unacceptance of her. She will be hurt and feel that her sex is not good enough for you.

Guideline 3: Stay Connected

If a young man “stays with his body” during masturbation and doesn’t disconnect to a fantasy world, he can avoid lust.

Why? If you practice connected sexuality now, you will be able to enjoy connected sex with your future wife.

Women want you present—mentally and emotionally, not just physically—when having sex. Disconnected sex is not only distasteful to women, but it is also undesirable.

Guideline 4: Monthly Check-ins

Talk to your son every month about how he’s doing on the above three guidelines. This is by far your most important guideline. Each month have a conversation about frequency, fantasy and staying connected. This routine will become normal to your son—maybe uncomfortable the first couple of times, but normal.

Your consistency about the regular check-ins will open the door to conversations about sexual issues. This should be a normal part of the father/son relationship, which should continue even if he goes away to college.

Why? He needs to learn that male sexuality can be discussed openly and honestly with another man. He will know that he is normal sexually, and when he has sexual challenges, that sexual honesty and accountability are the solutions. This guideline alone will save your son so much potential harm. He won’t feel alone in his sexuality.

If he makes mistakes, you can pray together and minister to him during his sexual development. The bonding you develop can make your relationship with your son so much stronger, and he will feel that he can trust you with anything in his life.

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