

Planning for Success

REFLECT

Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

Ephesians 2:4-10 ESV

God had a plan for us since the beginning of time.

This decision to pursue purity is one of the most important decisions of your son/daughter's life. There are so many great reasons for choosing to remain abstinent, but one of the most important reasons is that it's God's will. I want to encourage you to share with your child/ren all of the blessings that come from waiting until marriage.

Keep reminding your child of the importance of his or her life in God's eyes and about the rewards for staying sexually pure. Encourage constantly and supply your child with expressions of your love. Then remind him/her that God's love runs even deeper than yours!

Just as God desires to keep your child pure, he also wants you to be pure and holy! God has an amazing plan for your life! He knew you before you were even born, and he had a plan for you before you were conceived. Through your trials, temptations, and shortcomings, God will always love you! While he will never abandon you, you will experience the most happiness and find the most peace when you are following his plan for your life.

LEARN **How can I help safeguard my child?**

It's been said that all males have a certain question regarding their manhood that demands an answer. Likewise, all females crave a response to a particular question about their own femininity and identity. Our gender-specific question nags at our hearts from early childhood and continues throughout our lives, especially if we get a negative response or no response at all during our formidable years.

According to John and Staci Elderedge, for boys, the question is: "*Do I have what it takes to be a man?*" For girls, the question is, "*Am I lovely?*"¹

When the family relationships and early life experiences of children convey a resounding "no" to their most vulnerable questions, or if there is a lack of affirmation one way or the other, children do the one thing that comes natural—*search for someone to give them the response they crave*. A young person may turn to a local gang for acceptance and validation or a loving Sunday school teacher, depending on who reaches out to him first. His allegiance will lie with whoever answers "yes" to his heart's question, even if this affirmation comes from a deceptive, manipulative source.

Young people operating out of a broken identity are on a desperate hunt for validation, and premarital sex can be a very alluring outlet.

Why young men seek affirmation through premarital sex:

Even though years have past since I was a teenager, I still recall “locker room” conversations. Guys would brag and swap stories about who they fooled around with and how physically far they managed to get. The bigger breasted the girl, and the more a young man was able to coax her into doing, the more accolades he received from his peers. In such cases, every pat on the back and sigh of envy communicates one thing to a boy, “Yes, I *do* have what it takes to be man!”

A young man’s ability to manipulate a girl into having sex hardly exemplifies biblical manhood, but with no knowledge of such truths, his conquests with females make him feel like a man. Sex becomes the outlet he relies on to bolster his own distorted sense of self-confidence.

In a national survey, nearly one-third of 15-to-17 year olds, especially boys, said they had experienced pressure to have sex.²

Why young women seek affirmation through premarital sex:

I don’t believe young girls engage in promiscuity simply for sexual gratification. Are there girls who are so desperate for attention that they will give their bodies to one boy after another in hopes of feeling loved? Yes. But it’s always about getting her question answered—*Am I lovely?*

Seventy-five percent of teen girls 15 to 19 agree that society tells girls that attracting boys and acting sexy are some of the most important things girls can do.³

A guy looking to take advantage of a girl sexually knows exactly what kind of female to target and just what to say her. He’s on the lookout for an attractive girl who feels worthless. He knows that, if he tells her she means the world to him (“You are lovely to me!”), she’ll most likely surrender her body. When he takes her physical intimacy, dumps her, and then brags about his victory to his schoolmates, it only drives home what she has always believed, “*No, I am not lovely.*”

MOM AND DAD’S ROLE

As parents, what can we do? For starters, we can invest time, affection, and attention into our kids, which goes a long way toward answering their hearts’ question and deterring them from “looking for love in all the wrong places.”

Secondly, we can help our kids understand that sex is *never* the answer to their search for acceptance, popularity, or identity.

Dad, what are you saying to your daughter about her worth and uniqueness? How are you helping your son to understand that sexual exploits do *not* equate to manliness?

Mom, does your daughter know how much you cherish her – even on those days when she struggles to control her emotions? Have you spent quality time with your son lately and explained to him how painful it is for a young girl to be used for her body?

CREATING A HEALTHY MORAL ATMOSPHERE

Our spiritual enemy is on a mission to exploit our children’s sexuality as early in their lives as possible. Knowing this, the *moral atmosphere* in our homes is instrumental in either provoking or protecting our children’s sexual appetites. Consider the following facts, according to the National Coalition for the Protection of Children and Families:⁴

- I Seventy-five percent of prime time television in the 1999-2000 season included sexual content.
- I Over 80 percent of shows popular with teens contain sexual content, a rate higher than shows for other audiences. Only 15 percent of sexual encounters on TV alluded to the possible risks or responsibilities of sexual activity.
- I Adolescents who watch television with high levels of sexual content are *twice as likely* to initiate sexual intercourse and also more likely to initiate other sexual activities.
- I Teens with high levels of exposure to rap videos, which often promote drug use, violence and sex, are significantly more likely to acquire an STD.
- I Movies have an 87 percent likelihood of presenting sexual material.
- I Seventy percent of sexual advances over the Internet happened while youngsters were on a home computer.
- I The average age of first Internet exposure to pornography is 11 years old.
- I The largest consumer of Internet pornography is the 12-17 age group.

STAND GUARD – ENACT A PLAN

Parents, the conclusion is obvious. We must guard our kids against the toxic media influences that vie for their attention through avenues such as television programs, movies, internet activity, magazines, and music. Are you familiar with the lyrics to the songs your child is committing to memory from his or her iPod?

Unfortunately, many teenagers get much of their “sex education” from the media, which present a distorted view of sexual activity, associating it with fun, excitement, competition, danger, or violence, and rarely showing the risks of unprotected sex.⁵

Why not have a family discussion tonight and collaborate about what your household will and will not allow into your home in the form of media? Also, decide what monitoring methods you are going to establish to keep an eye on your kid’s media choices. Using Ephesians 5:3 as your standard, as well as the rest of the Bible’s wisdom, set some clearly defined boundaries, and then stick to them! Don’t allow the humor of a certain sitcom or the “overall plot” of an intriguing movie to be your excuse for compromising.

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity...because these are improper for God’s holy people (Ephesians 5:3 NIV).

Parents, let’s model an unwavering commitment to moral purity for our kids so that they understand what it means to resist compromise. Let’s lead by example as we avoid illicit media choices and maintain consistent standards from one day to the next. Finally, let’s expose the lie that sex can somehow satisfy our children’s internal need to feel loved, admired, and accepted and instead create a home atmosphere that communicates those truths to our kids’.

1. John Eldredge, *Wild at Heart: Discovering the Secret of a Man’s Soul* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001); and John Eldredge and Staci Elderedge, *Captivating: Unveiling the*

Mystery of a Woman's Soul (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007).

2. Diane E. Papalia, Sally Wendkos Olds, and Ruth Duskin Feldman, *A Child's Developing Word, Infancy Through Adolescence*, 11th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2008), 476.
3. Bill Albert, *With One Voice: America's Adults and Teens Sound Off About Teen Pregnancy* (Washington DC: National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2004), 6, www.thenationalcampaign.org/national-data/
4. National Coalition for the Protection of Families and Children, "Current Statistics," <http://www.puremorality.org/NCPFCstats.htm> (accessed 18 Sept 2008).
5. Papalia, Olds, and Feldman, 478.

ANSWER

- What could you say to your child's most pressing question ("Do I have what it takes to be a man?" or "Am I lovely?") if you noticed they were struggling with this issue?

- Is your child lacking affirmation from a mother or father figure? If so, create a list of some young adults or close family members who could serve as a mentor in your child's life. Contact them and look for ways to get them involved.

- Do the media standards in your home protect your child's sexual appetite? If not, what do you plan to do about it?

- Out of all four lessons, what points in this book stood out to you the most and why? What do you plan to do as a result?

PRAY

Father, show me how to communicate to my child that he/she is loved, valued, and accepted and that premarital sex will not satisfy his/her soul. Next, forgive me if I have allowed the world's perversion and sexual immorality to infiltrate my home and subsequently, my child's mind and heart. From this day forward, help me to take an unwavering stand against any influence that ultimately works against Your will for my family. Amen.