

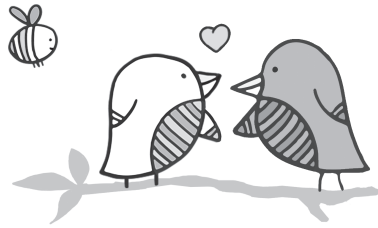


FACING THE FACTS

Facing the Facts

The Truth about Sex & You

STAN & BRENN A JONES



NavPress 

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Facing the Facts: The Truth about Sex and You

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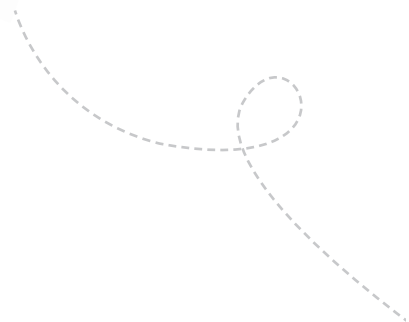
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TO JENNIFER & BRIAN





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We remain thankful for our friends mentioned in previous editions, with whom we shared the joys and travails of the journey of parenting our young children through to adulthood and with whom we shared enriching dialogue about the ideas in this book. Continuing thanks also to thirteen generations of graduate students in Stan's Human Sexuality summer course (1983–95), whose insightfulness, openness, and inquisitiveness so enriched our understanding of sexuality, and whose stories of how they learned (or mostly not) about sexuality in their families were an inspiration for these books. Revisions to the second-edition children's books were enriched by the professional reviews of Steve Gerali and Elaine Roberts; special thanks to Susan Martins Miller for her editorial expertise on that edition.

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AN IMPORTANT WORD TO PARENTS

General Introduction to the God's Design for Sex Series

PARENTS, GOD GAVE YOU your sexuality as a precious gift. And you're reading this book because God has given you a child you love as a gift flowing from your sexuality.

God gave your child the gift of sexuality as well. If handled responsibly, this gift will be a source of blessing and delight. How can parents help make this happen?

Many forces will push children to make bad choices about sex based on false beliefs and values and on misplaced spiritual priorities. These forces are more powerful, confusing, persuasive, and ever present today than ever in history, thanks to the power of social media and the confusion of our culture. From their earliest years, children are bombarded with destructive, misleading messages—messages about the nature of sexual intimacy, about marriage, about family, about the boundaries of godly sexual expression, and even about the basic creational design of humanity as male and female.

These messages come from everywhere—through music, television, the Internet, discussions with their friends, school sex-education programs, and many other sources. The result? Confusion, doubt, and shame, as well as distressing rates of sexual experimentation, teen pregnancy, abortion, sexually transmitted diseases, divorce, and devastated lives.

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We believe that *God means for Christian parents to be their children's primary sex educators*. First messages are the most powerful—why wait until your child hears distorted views and then try to correct the misunderstanding? Sexuality is a beautiful gift—why not present it to your child the way God intended? God's Word is trustworthy and true—why not teach your child how to understand and live by its guidance in the area of sexuality? Why not establish yourself as the trusted expert to whom your child can turn to hear God's truth about sexuality?

The God's Design for Sex series is designed to help parents shape their children's character, particularly in the area of sexuality. Sex education in the family is less about giving biological information and more about *shaping your child's moral character*. The earlier you start helping your child see himself or herself as God does, including in the area of sexuality, the stronger your child will be as they enter the turbulent teenage years.

How and When to Tell Your Kids about Sex is a parents' resource manual in which we offer a comprehensive understanding of what parents can do to shape their children's sexual character. The four children's books in this series are designed for parents and children to work through together. Those books are structured to be read with your child at ages three to five (*The Story of Me*), five to eight (*Before I Was Born*), eight to twelve (*What's the Big Deal?*), and twelve to sixteen (*Facing the Facts*). These age ranges are not strict formulas; you need to exercise your judgment about your child's maturity level, environment, needs, and so forth to decide when and how to introduce the books.

The four children's books are meant to provide the foundational information kids need. Further, they are to be starting points for you to build upon and personalize as you discuss sexuality with your child in an age-appropriate manner. They provide an anchor point for discussions in order to jump-start deeper explorations. These books help break the silence and put the issues out on the table.

Don't simply hand these books to your child to read, *because our whole point is to empower you as the parent to shape your child's sexual character.* The books are meant to start and shape conversations between you and your child and to deepen your impact on your child in the area of sexuality.

In this series, we address controversial topics about which Christians disagree, including masturbation, how far people should go sexually when they're dating, contraception, gender identity, homosexuality, and more. Our goal in doing so is not to presumptuously present our answers as completely right but rather to encourage you to reach reasoned conclusions and to teach your child as you see fit before the Lord.

We have tried in each book to present information that we believe children of that age must have, without presenting controversial topics "too early." Your child may be confronted with complicated and confusing issues at a much earlier age than you expect. In such cases, you can draw on our discussions in later books to inform your dialogue with your child. For instance, we hold off on discussion of sexual orientation until the book for eight-to-twelve-year-olds (*What's the Big Deal?*), and on discussion of gender identity and transgender issues until the book for twelve-to-sixteen-year-olds (*Facing the Facts*). But your child may need more basic information much earlier, and in such cases, we urge you to use or adapt material from this book and our books for older children to meet your child's needs.

Why start early? Because if you as the parent are not teaching your child about sexuality, your child will learn distorted lessons about sexuality from television, the Internet, and playground conversations. If you are silent on sex while the rest of the world is abuzz about it, your child will learn that you cannot help in this key area. If you teach godly, truthful, tactful, and appropriate lessons about sexuality, your child will trust you more and see you as a parent who tells the truth.

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We'll briefly unpack each of the books at more length to help you discern which would be most helpful to you in your current parenting season.

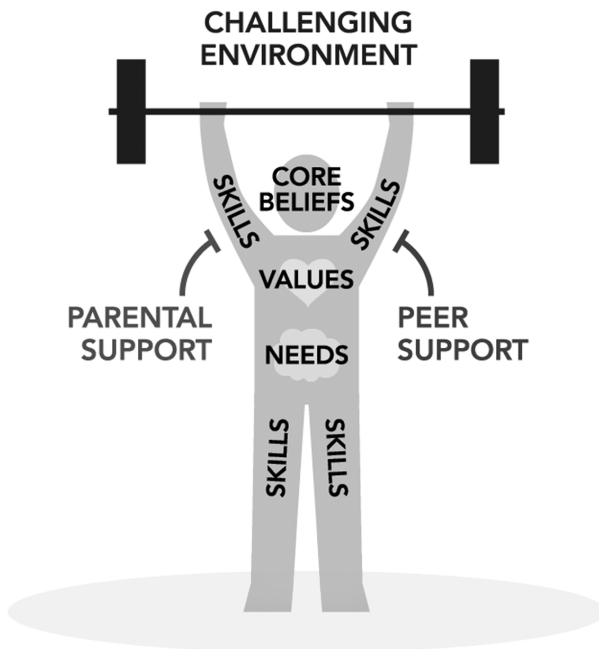
PARENT RESOURCE

How and When to Tell Your Kids about Sex:

A Lifelong Approach to Shaping Your Child's Sexual Character

This book is the parents' comprehensive resource manual for the God's Design for Sex series. We take on the hardest subjects, such as sexual abuse, gender identity, and homosexuality, helping you know when and how to bring up these subjects. Our goals for *How and When to Tell Your Kids about Sex* are to

- help you understand your role in shaping your child's character, including his or her views, attitudes, and beliefs about sexuality;



AN IMPORTANT WORD TO PARENTS

- instruct you in the twelve key principles for Christian sex education in the home and how to implement the strategies and tactics suggested by these principles;
- familiarize you with the challenges that your child will face from secular culture and empower you with strategies and skills to help them overcome those challenges;
- ground your understanding of God's view of our sexuality;
- equip you and your child to explain and defend the traditional Christian view of sexual morality in these modern times;
- examine each major developmental stage of your child's life and share age-appropriate information and approaches;
- address directly the most complex issues you and your child might or will face in today's culture in a manner grounded in biblical thinking and informed by the best contemporary science;
- explore how you can most powerfully influence your child to live a life of sexual chastity; and
- equip you to provide your child with the strengths necessary to stand by their commitment to traditional Christian morality.

As you read the following descriptions of each of the books for your child, please know that the concepts and issues presented in each of these books flow directly from the background provided by this foundational parents' guide.

AGES THREE TO FIVE

The Story of Me: Babies, Bodies, and a Very Good God

Your most important task with your young child is to lay a spiritual foundation for their understanding of sexuality. God loves the human

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body (and the whole human person), and the body is included in what God called “very good” (Genesis 1:31). Children’s bodies, their existence as boys or girls, and also their sexual organs are gifts from God.

Young children can begin to develop a wondrous appreciation for God’s marvelous gift of sexuality by understanding some of the basics of fetal development. In this book, we discuss the growth of a child inside a mother’s body and the birth process. With such instruction, young children begin to develop a trust for God’s law and to see God as a lawgiver who has the best interests of his people at heart. God is the giver of good gifts!

Finally, we want children to see families grounded on the life-long marital union of one man and one woman as God’s intended framework for the nurture and love of children. If you are reading the book as a single parent or with an adopted child, you will have opportunity to talk about how God sometimes creates and blesses alternative forms of families. We hope that you will find *The Story of Me* a wonderful starting point for discussing sexuality with your young child.

AGES FIVE TO EIGHT

Before I Was Born: God Knew My Name by Carolyn Nystrom,

with Stan and Brenna Jones

Before I Was Born emphasizes the creational goodness of our bodies, our existence as men and women, and our sexual organs. This book introduces new topics as well, including the growth and changes boys and girls experience as they become men and women.

It includes a tactful but direct explanation of sexual intercourse between husbands and wives. God wants sexual intercourse limited to marriage, because sexual intercourse brings husbands and wives close together in a way that honors God and helps to build strong families.

Parents often ask, “Do my kids really need to know about sexual intercourse this early?” Remembering that you are the decision maker as to whether you use this book with a very mature five-year-old or with a more slowly maturing eight-year-old, the answer is yes. We believe this is a strategic decision parents must face based on their individual children, considering that first messages are always the most powerful messages. If, as a Christian parent, you want to begin to shape a godly attitude in your child about sex, why would you wait until they first soak in the misperceptions of the world? Why not build godly attitudes and views from the foundation up?

If you’re reading this with an adopted child, use this opportunity to explain that not every couple will have biological children. If a baby doesn’t grow in the wife’s womb, the couple might look for a baby to adopt. And some women are not able to take care of a baby, so another family might adopt the baby and make it part of their family forever. Even though the baby grew inside a different mother, the husband and wife love this baby very much. Adoption is another way that God makes families.

AGES EIGHT TO TWELVE

What’s the Big Deal?: Why God Cares about Sex

This book reinforces the messages of our first two children’s books, covering the basics of sexual intercourse and the fundamental creational goodness of our sexuality. It continues the task of deliberately building children’s understanding of why God intends sexual intercourse to be reserved for marriage.

This book goes further than the earlier books, adding more of the facts your child will need to know as they approach puberty. Further, it will help you begin the process of inoculating your child against the negative moral messages of the world. In *How and When to Tell Your Kids about Sex*, we argue that Christian parents should

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not try to completely shelter their children from the destructive moral messages of the world. If they mature in environments where they are not exposed to germs, children grow up with depleted immune systems that are ineffectual for resisting disease. When parents shelter their children too much, children are left naive and vulnerable; parents risk communicating that the negative messages of the world are so powerful that Christians cannot even talk about them.

But neither should you let your child be inundated with society's destructive messages. The principle of inoculation suggests that you should deliberately expose your child to the contrary moral messages they will hear from the world. It should be in your *home* that your child first learns that many people in our world do not believe in reserving sex for marriage, and it should be in your home that your child first understands such problems as pornography, teenage pregnancy, gay marriage, sexual identity and gender issues, and so forth. In this way, you can help build your child's defenses against departing from God's ways.

AGES TWELVE TO SIXTEEN

Facing the Facts: The Truth about Sex and You

Facing the Facts: The Truth about Sex and You builds upon all that has come before but also—in more depth—prepares your child for puberty. At this age, your child is old enough for more detailed information about the changes their body is about to go through and about the adult body they will soon receive as a gift from God.

In this book, your child will hear again about God's view of sexuality and about his loving and beautiful intentions for how this gift should be used. The distorted ways in which our world views sex must be clearly labeled, and your child must be prepared to face views and beliefs contrary to those they learn at home. We attempt

to do all this while also talking about the many confusing feelings of puberty and early adolescence.

While children could read this book independently, we do not believe this would be optimal. We encourage you to read it alongside your child and then talk about it together. You could go chapter by chapter. Alternatively, you can read it and use it as a resource for important conversations with your soon-to-be or young teenager.

In this book, we address the most controversial topics of the series, topics about which biblically grounded Christians can and do frequently disagree. We make suggestions about appropriate moral positions on all of the important issues, including sexual-intimacy limits before marriage, masturbation, contraception, gender identity, homosexuality, and more.

We have joked that in each of these books, we are guaranteed to say something to lead almost any Christian parent to declare us too conservative or too liberal on some topic or to disagree with us somewhere. We do not presume our answers are completely right. At the very least, we hope our thoughts empower you, the parent, to think the matter through and present a better answer to your child as the Lord guides your thinking.

All of these books were written as if dialogue is an ongoing reality between mother, father, and child. Yet in some homes, only one parent is willing to talk about sex. Many Christian parents shoulder the responsibility of parenting alone due to separation, divorce, or death. Grandparents sometimes must raise their grandkids. We've tried to be sensitive to adoptive families and families that do not fit the mold of the traditional nuclear family, but we cannot anticipate or respond to all the unique needs of families. Use these books with creativity and discernment to meet the needs of your situation.

We hope these books will be valuable tools in raising a new generation of faithful Christian young people. If you follow this plan,

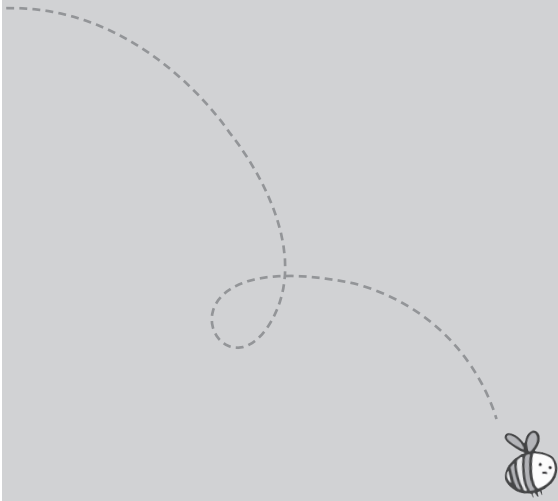
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we believe your child will have a healthy, positive, accepting, godly attitude about sexuality. As an unmarried person, your child will be more likely to live a confident, chaste life as a faithful witness to the work of Christ in their heart. If your child does marry, we believe they will have a greater chance of having a fulfilled, loving, rewarding life as a husband or wife. It is our prayer that this curriculum will encourage and equip you to dive into the wonderful work of shaping your child's sexual character.

PART 1

Getting the Big Picture!





CHAPTER 1

Different Stories, Different Lives

Zoe can't wait to grow up. As long as she can remember, she has looked forward to being an adult, having the responsibilities and freedoms of an adult, having a grown-up body, and moving on to whatever God has in store for her.

Adam, on the other hand, wishes he wouldn't grow up. He's happy just as he is. He loves his friends; he loves to play. He feels as though everything in his life is just the way it should be, and he sees no good reason why his childhood should end.

HOW DO YOU feel about growing up? Are you excited or worried? Most of us have a mixture of good and bad feelings about growing up. It's hard! All mothers and fathers have experienced at least some of the same feelings you're having, though it's hard for some to remember—and even harder to talk about.

Almost all adults asked the same questions you may be asking: “Why is this happening? Why is God doing this to me? What will it be like to be an adult with an adult's body? What is sex? What is it for, and what does it mean?”

These are good questions. And depending on what you choose to believe about your life as a whole, the answers to them can be very

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different. There are many different ways for us to understand our lives. Each life is rather like a story, and sex is part of each.

Let's imagine the possibilities as four basic stories. You're moving steadily down the highway of life, and ahead of you are four different exits—four different paths to choose from. Each gives answers to the deepest questions of life, questions such as the following:

- Where did the world and everything in it—including me—come from?
- Is there purpose in life?
- Is there anything special about being a human being?
- Are truth, beauty, and goodness real?
- Is love real? And what does sex have to do with love?

Your decision about which story to believe and to live by has real consequences for your life. Let's hear from four people—each one represents one of the four views.

BAILEY, THE BOLD MATERIALIST

“Sure, I can answer those questions. The first answer is ‘We don't know why the world exists or where it came from. We can't ever know.’ The other answers are ‘No, there's no purpose, we're nothing special, and all those things like love and beauty are just labels we put on feelings. They're not real things—they don't really exist.’

“Look, scientists agree on one thing: All that there is anywhere is energy and matter. That's all that exists. We're just a complicated bunch of atoms that take human form until we die—then it's over. There's nothing else—no god, no reason, nothing. The universe happened by pure chance, life happened by pure chance, evolution happened by chance, and billions of years later, here we are.

“People imagine they have a special ‘purpose’ because they're

too afraid to admit that it's all just the result of chance. They make up a god and other stuff like love because they're afraid to be realistic.

“The thing that comes closest to being a purpose is the instinct we feel to perpetuate life. Evolution builds into our genes the need to survive and breed. That's why there's sex. All the rest that goes along with it—love, beauty, etc.—is just an illusion. Sex is just the way for my genes to get into the next generation and beyond.”

TAYLOR, THE INWARD SEEKER

“Wow, Bailey, did you ever miss the point! Yes, the universe happened, and yes, life has evolved over billions of years. But something special happened in the universe: Somehow, something bigger than just energy and matter happened.

“Human beings are part of that. We've evolved to sense and reach for something beyond the material world. We can grope toward something true, real, and purposeful—even if that something is different for each of us.

“These differences are okay because each of us is basically good. Each of us has a special spark we can find by looking inside ourselves. We must look beyond the mere physical to find our true selves. We should be seeking and defining our real selves—that's what life's about! You don't find your true self by following rules others create—you live true to yourself.

“Sex sometimes means you love someone—but it can also mean you like them, you just want to have fun with them, or whatever. As long as no one is hurt, no one is forced to do something they don't want to do, and everyone is playing fair, then anything goes.

“Some people think everyone is either male or female, but that's too limited. Our true selves aren't defined by others or even by our bodies—we're defined by the 'inner Me.' Some people are girls

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trapped in boys' bodies, some are boys trapped in girls' bodies, and some people are something else—whatever they choose to be.”

RYAN, THE RELAXED CHURCHGOER

“Taylor, you’re right that Bailey is missing some things, but so are you. God must be real, because otherwise the universe doesn’t make any sense.

“I happen to be a Christian because I grew up that way, but there’s not just one path to God. Jesus was a good teacher. I think he was the best teacher and the one who understood God the best, but all the major religions say basically the same things in different words. I think God loves us and wants us to find that inward spark you talked about. God wants us to be our true selves, and the teachings of Jesus can help us do that.

“God wants us to love others and be good. God means sex to be something special, an expression of love. Some fanatic weirdos get all hung up on the tiniest details of what the Bible says, but we have to use common sense to figure out how it applies today.

“Because sex is an expression of love, we should be careful with it. We should feel something strong before we share our bodies with people. Certainly love can be just as real between two men or two women as it can be between a man and a woman.

“People who love each other can get married, but they don’t have to as long as they’re loving and committed. A wedding is just one way to be faithful. And in an overpopulated world, the choice to have a baby is a serious one. Every woman should have the right to stop a pregnancy if she’s not ready to have a child.”

JORDAN, THE JESUS-FOLLOWER

“I agree that there’s something real beyond the physical universe. I see beauty that’s real and good, but I also see a lot of ugliness. I think

we have yearnings for higher purpose for our lives. We believe goodness and justice exist—but there's a lot of evil in the world and in us. And we know there's truth—but it's often clouded by distortion and falsehood.

“The early Christians who wrote the Bible believed that God revealed himself perfectly in Jesus. If this God made people in his image, then it makes sense for us to see beauty, purpose, goodness, and truth—because God is all of those things.

“Jesus is widely admired, but if you read the Bible, you're confronted with a dilemma: Jesus was more than a nice guy. The Bible presents him as doing miraculous things and making outrageous claims about himself, such as that through him we could ‘not perish but have eternal life’ (John 3:16) and ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me’ (John 14:6).

“The most outrageous part of the story is that after Jesus died a horrible death on the cross, he rose from the dead in victory over all sin and evil. The lives of the apostles prove they really believed their claims: This defeated, discouraged group became dynamic leaders who changed the world. Of the eleven original apostles who stayed faithful, ten died by brutal execution and one died in isolated banishment, all for their faith.

“I follow Jesus, God's eternal Son, so I can have purpose, meaning, and eternal life. Because I believe in him, I believe my life should be understood and lived as he would want me to, according to his teachings.

“Through the Bible, we're taught that sex is a special gift and part of what it means to be made in God's image. If we use the gift of sex rightly, we have the best chance to experience real, faithful love that gives us joy and brings us closer to God.”

Which story is closest to the one you believe makes sense of your world? Which will you choose? If your perspective is similar to that

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of Jordan, Jesus' follower, or even if you're undecided but open to this view, then we invite you to think with us about sex as Jesus does.

In this book we expand on Jordan's words about sex being a gift from God. We talk about the realities of how your body will change and about the very different choices young men and women make about sex because they're living by different stories.

Our most important goal is that you understand God's view of sex, because we believe that during this critical period when you're physically becoming an adult woman or man, you can begin to understand that sex is a bigger, better, more lovely gift than you ever realized.

Let's get started.