

ESPECIALLY FOR PARENTS AND PASTORS

TEACH PARENTS TO TEACH EFFECTIVELY

Prerequisite for Healthy Conversations about Sex with Kids

We must reflect on our own past sin in this area before trying to set the next generation straight. We must think through and repent of our own sinful choices and seek God's healing from them. This involves taking an inventory of sexual sin in our lives and listing the consequences of those sins. We wish to deny that these sins were very significant and want to leave the past in the past. Many of us are ashamed of our pasts or pretend that it wasn't a big deal. However, just like rotten food in the refrigerator, if we don't get it out and deal with it, then the past remains in the present for us and will most likely continue into the future with our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. It is God's promise!

The Word talks about the sins of the fathers being visited on future generations. I like the Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB, 2009) translation best when it comes to this passage in Exodus 34 because it uses the word "consequences" that will be brought on the coming generations.¹ The Hebrew word here denotes punishment of iniquity. The guilty (unrepentant) of sin will not go unpunished and will continue the consequences of their wrongdoing on their children and grandchildren to the third and fourth generations. As abuse is generational, abuse of God's laws and His favor upon us will also become generational unless we quite purposefully put a stop to it. It becomes a generational curse that will not be broken just by ignoring it.

God says if we love Him and choose to follow in His ways, keeping His commands (living a repentant lifestyle), we have His blessing. But if we allow our hearts to turn away, don't listen to Him, and allow ourselves to be led astray from His ways (living a non-repentant lifestyle), He promises that we will perish. We have two choices, one that results in good consequences, one that results in bad ones. These are the choices and the outcomes:

- Life and blessing – for us and the next several generations to live, love the Lord, obey Him, remaining faithful to Him. He is our life and will prolong this life of blessing as He promised.
- Death and curses – for us and the next several generations, if our hearts turn away and we do not listen to Him but allow ourselves to be led astray, we're going to perish.²

Paul, when speaking to the Corinthian church said: *If anyone does not love the Lord, let that person be **cursed!** Come, Lord!*³ Let's not allow anyone in our circle to be cursed by the Lord! We must practice and teach godly sorrow. Though we have failed at truly loving God and keeping His commands, we are redeemed from the curse through Christ by our repentance. He became the curse in our place!⁴

Living out our faith in repentance will allow us to stop the generational curse that would otherwise lead to death for ourselves and our descendants. Part of loving God fully and living out our

¹ Exodus 34:6-7 HCSB.

² Deuteronomy 30:16-22 HCSB.

³ 1 Corinthians 16:22.

⁴ Galatians 3:13.

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faith means instructing our children according to God’s Word. We must *impress* it on them repeatedly in every possible way, day in and day out.⁵

Some of us remained pure until marriage. Why is this so highly underrated and unmentioned in the church? We should be encouraged all the more to be a testimony to our children (and others) by sharing with them that it is possible to withstand the world’s influence, obey God in this area, and escape the nasty consequences. We can talk to them, firsthand, about the benefits and blessings of saving the sacredness of sex for marriage. We should also share our stories with the entire youth group. They also need to hear testimonies about the dangers and consequences of sex outside of marriage.

David Galvan brings up another good point. The Word tells us to train up a child in the way (discipline and instruction) of the Lord.⁶ However, both parents and the church often seek to train up children and youth in the way of themselves. Only the Lord is perfect and without fault. His ways are right and true from beginning to eternity. Our ways are fallible. “To all perfection I see a limit, but your commands are boundless.”⁷

When we train up our children in our own ways and human expectations, not bringing them to the foot of the cross, where there is redemption, forgiveness, and healing through Jesus, they will not know that it is safe to approach us with their failures. So many young people have no idea whether it is “safe” to approach their parents or youth workers when they have precariously messed up. This is because, in their minds, these people are the perfect and final authority; and perfect parents and youth workers can be scary. How many young people say, “My parents will kill me if they find out about...”

Adults need to stop pretending that they have it all together on their own, but instead assert that their authority over their children or the youth they work with is under God’s authority. Adults *and* children are accountable to God, His Word, and His people. Let us not be obstacles for children and youth to experience this truth. We so often focus on their failures and call *them* “bad” (not only their behavior), which mars their identity in Christ. God, on the other hand, focuses on the blood of Jesus Christ that covers our sins and calls us “holy and blameless”⁸ while clearly instructing us in what is right. Unlike us, the LORD is compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin.⁹ That is the character of God that we and our children need to focus on, first and foremost. He also has the power (and promises) to not let us get away with sin because He loves us so much, giving us a healthy fear of Him. Moreover, because of Jesus, the LORD’s throne of grace is safe for *all* His children to approach in confidence where we may receive mercy and grace when we so desperately need it.¹⁰ Rather than “obstacles to” let us instead become “conduits of” this amazing grace for our children!

⁵ Deuteronomy 6:4–8.

⁶ Ephesians 6:4.

⁷ Psalm 119:96.

⁸ Ephesians 1:4.

⁹ Exodus 34:6–7.

¹⁰ Hebrews 4:16.