

**Institute for Christian Teaching
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**TEACHING BIBLICAL SEXUAL PRINCIPLES
THROUGH A PRACTICAL APPROACH**

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Introduction

For the last three years, I have been using an approach to communicate sensitive but relevant information to all age groups. The method has held the interest of all those in the audiences and congregations to which I have spoken. It involves using the method that Jesus used while He lived among men. The results have been overwhelming. The responses from audiences comprising both young and old, have been positive and encouraging. This strategy of presenting materials on character development and on making wise, appropriate, and timely sexual choices using objects has captivated listeners from all generational groups.

Jesus used parables and practical objects to achieve His desired outcomes. His illustrations included earthly familiar things to teach spiritual lessons. White (1900) writes: “The scenes upon which the eye daily rests were all connected with some spiritual truth, so that nature is clothed with the parables of the Master.... Jesus desired to awaken inquiry. He sought to arouse the careless, and impress truth upon the heart” (pp. 20-21). Speaking of Christ’s approach in using object lessons, White (1900) emphasized: “No more effective method of instruction could He have employed. By connecting His teaching with the scenes of life, experience, or nature, He secured their attention and impressed their hearts” (p. 21). She noted that when the hearers afterward interacted with the objects that Christ had so creatively used in His teaching, “they recalled the words of the divine Teacher. To the minds that were open to the Holy Spirit, the significance of the Saviour’s teaching unfolded more and more. Mysteries grew clear, and that which had been hard to grasp became evident” (p. 21).

Today, the moral values of many youth are proscribed by the media. Many students in Seventh-day Adventist schools have distorted ideas concerning how they must conduct themselves in life. In this regard, the Christian school plays a pivotal role in character development. White (1900) notes that Christ’s content did not include suggestions in scientific lines, “. . . nor deal in abstract theories, but in that which is essential to the development of character, that which will enlarge man’s capacity for knowing God, and increase his efficiency to do good. He spoke to men of those truths that relate to the conduct of life, and that take hold upon eternity” (p. 23).

In this presentation I will use everyday objects: wrapped gifts, fruits, flowers, pieces of string, and other tangibles, to teach lessons of eternal realities. My reason for using these objects

is to plant a stimuli in the psyche of each student. These objects captivate the attention of the listeners, and as they interact with these common objects in the future, it is hoped that the memory of these lessons will be awakened in their consciousness and will create a similar effect that White (1900) described about Jesus method, “Natural things were the medium for the spiritual; the things of nature and the life-experience of His hearers were connected with the truths of the written word. Leading thus from the natural to the spiritual kingdom, Christ’s parables are links in the chain of truth that unites man with God, and earth with heaven” (pp. 17-18).

The lessons learnt will provide a framework for church leaders at all levels including pastors, teachers, parents, youth leaders and many others, to use in guiding individuals from all life periods. The young, in particular, will be helped in making wise choices in sexual thought and conduct. The basis for teaching responsible sexual behavior is built on a solid foundation of teaching clearly articulated, biblical principles of character development.

Teaching the Importance of Character Development in Building a Framework for Sexual Thought and Practice

Sexual maturity and responsibility leading to abstinence from premarital sex come from a character that is well shaped and developed, based on biblical principles. Students will find it easier to accept biblical guidelines on sexual conduct once each has developed a character that is motivated by deep abiding principles that emanate from a moral compass inside, and not merely from external trappings or rules.

Students need to make well thought-out decisions, especially when such have long term consequences. Many of them emphasize mere external appearances and de-emphasize character formation and development. Teachers and other significant leaders will do well to help students place greater emphasis on the development of sound moral character. White (1952) places character above every other attainment. She notes: “Character building is the most important work ever entrusted to human beings; and never before was its diligent study so important as now” (p. 225).

The following illustrations demystify the appeal of external beauty as the point of reference, and bring to focus the relevance and pertinence of character development.

Strategy to Teach the Importance of Character Development and Physical Appearance

Purpose: The purpose of this illustration is to teach the listeners that physical appearance, though important, is nothing but cosmetics and skin deep if not matched by inner beauty and worth.

Materials: Two well-wrapped and attractive packages, one possessing an item of great worth and value and the other garbage or trash. The contents should not be useful items that have been discarded. The audience should perceive them as trash/garbage.

Two members from the audience are asked to volunteer or are selected to participate in this illustration. The teacher presents them with **two beautifully wrapped gift packages**. Each participant is allowed to select one of the packages and proceeds to open it. When both are opened, they see that one is an exquisite gift item, whereas the other gift is a collection of garbage items. The difference is clear, visible, and obvious. The presenter then elicits from the audience the intended lessons about external and internal beauty. Emphasis is placed on the importance of inward as well as outward beauty in the context of character development.

The audience understands that one's external physical appearance should be attractive and winsome. God expects us to be neat, clean, and orderly in appearance. Parents and teachers should encourage their children/students to take care of their bodies, and of what they put on their bodies. Individuals who have a winning exterior will naturally draw the attention and interest of others.

Responsible adults need to lead their charges to realize that physical attractiveness is an insufficient accomplishment in life. The young need to develop worthwhile and valuable inner qualities. The apostle Peter in 1 Peter 3:3,4 (NIV) admonishes; "Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight." "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." Each individual should seek to incorporate into his/her character love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (Galatians 5:22,23) and chastity. He/she should choose what he/she puts into his life, what he/she

watches, what he reads, where he/she goes, and whom he/she chooses as his/her main companions.

The young should accept full responsibility for their character development. This should be pursued with vigor and diligence. Having developed themselves, they need to search beyond physical appearance when seeking to find companions or to build lasting friendships.

Strategy to Teach the Importance of Looking Beyond External Beauty

Purpose: This illustration teaches that some of the most beautiful character traits are found in people with the least winning exterior. We should never judge anyone on his/her physical appearance alone. Some of the world's greatest crooks are attractively attired and have many material goods, while some of the most genuine and sincere people are less than physically appealing.

Materials: Two unattractively wrapped gifts (may be in newspaper) are the items for the next demonstration. One is a gift of exquisite beauty while the other is garbage or trash.

Two members of the audience are asked to volunteer or are selected to participate in the illustration. Each chooses one of the two packages that is wrapped in unattractive wrapping paper, and proceeds to open it. The lesson emphasized is that external beauty, though desirable, is not conclusive in determining character. Those with less than winning exteriors often possess character of great worth. When choosing a life companion, or even a close associate, one should look deeper than mere externals, such as physical attractions and winning ways of his/her potential choice. An individual should get to know others beyond that which is seen. He/she should seek to discover the underlying beauty and the character traits of the potential confidant before committing to the relationships. He/she should also seek to develop him/herself beyond mere external trappings. When one is both externally and internally unattractive, it is double jeopardy.

Strategy to Clinch the Point in Emphasizing Character Development

Above Physical Appearance

Purpose: The aim is to show the hollowness of putting too much emphasis on the external appearance and little or none on character development.

Material: The attractively wrapped trashed and the unattractively wrapped gifts are used here.

The audience is presented with making a choice between beautifully wrapped trash and an unattractively wrapped quality item. The choice is always one of foregone conclusion. Warren (2002) reminds us that it is our character that we will take into eternity. He suggests that we make a list of the character qualities we want to work on, and include the “fruit of the Spirit,” or the Beatitudes.

The Strategy of Using a Time Line to Help Put One’s Life Span into Perspective

Developmentalists have used various frameworks for examining lifespan development. For example, Craig and Baucum (2002) describe the developmental “periods” and the age ranges that define them. These are based on Erik Erickson’s life stages as follows:

- Prenatal Period—conception to birth
- Infancy—Birth to 18-24 months of age
- Toddlerhood—12-15 months to 2-3 years of age
- Early Childhood—2-3 years to 5-6 years of age
- Middle Childhood—6 years to about 12 years of age
- Adolescence—about 12 years to 18-21 years of age
- Young Adulthood—18-21 years to 40 years of age
- Middle Adulthood—40 years to 60-65 years of age
- Older Adulthood—60-65 years of age to death (p. 5).

Generally, God has given approximately four score years to an individual. Breaking up this life span into small manageable periods of time might prove helpful when dealing with moral situations and issues. For the purpose of this illustration, the presenter will examine the human life span from three perspectives: years greatly influenced by parenting, years for laying an academic foundation, and years of dealing with the challenge of pre-marital sexual abstinence. Using a string approximately three feet long to represent a time line, the presenter will demonstrate the above conceptions of the human life span.

Parents and teachers have the opportunities and privileges to influence and shape their charges’ character and guide in their moral development. When the critical time periods are seized and fully utilized, there is a great possibility that students will build qualities that will last

a lifetime. We never teach a principle or a concept at the time it is needed. We teach it before it is needed. An aspiring chauffeur is taught to drive before he/she is given a car. A mechanic needs to learn the trade before he/she is given his/her first car to repair. Similarly parents and teachers ought to prepare the young with the principles they need, long before they need them.

When the leaders in each institution -- the home, the church and the school, recognize that they have but a short time to impact and influence their children or students, they will work passionately in accomplishing their tasks. Sound sexual principles, thoughts, and conduct, must be taught at every stage and should be placed in a time context. The next presentation will illustrate how a timeline can be used to teach the importance of timeliness in communicating values to parents, teachers, students, and other significant persons.

Purpose: The purpose of the demonstrations using a timeline is to communicate to parents, teachers, and students that no tasks, duty, or hardship lasts for ever. The lessons taught and learned, the decisions made, the principles inculcated, the concepts understood, the reckless actions postponed though borne with hardships, leave lifelong marks that shape the recipients and prepare them for lives of happiness.

Material: A three-foot long string divided into four equal parts. Each part represents one score or 20 years. A clothes-pin is moved along the continuum to illustrate the time period under discussion.

In each case, the presenter chooses two participants or welcomes two volunteers. The volunteers hold the timeline at each end. The presenter uses the clothes-pin to illustrate on the continuum (timeline) the time period he/she wishes to emphasize. For example, when illustrating that the period of greatest sexual difficulty for an individual is between ages 13 and 21, he/she moves the clothes-pin along the continuum to illustrate that time period.

Strategy to Teach Parents How to Instill Moral Values in their Children

For the first 16 to 18 years of life, children are dependent on and receive guidance from their parents. The principles and lessons learned are intended to guide and shape their lives for the next 62 to 64 years (from adolescence and young adulthood through older adulthood). During the years of great dependency, children benefit from warm nurturing parents who provide reasonable parental control and an abundance of praise and encouragement. Much of what parents do during this period guides the children's moral values, their social competence, and

their self-concepts. Craig and Baucum (2002) refer to different patterns of parenting -- authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and indifferent. They cite Maccoby whose notion about parenting styles is worth considering if children are to be receptive to parental guidance during these years. They posit:

Warm, nurturing parents smile at their children frequently and give praise and encouragement. They limit criticism, punishment, and signs of disapproval. In contrast, hostile parents criticize, punish, and ignore their children, rarely expressing affection or approval. Parental control and warmth directly affect children's aggressiveness and prosocial behavior, their self-concepts, their internalization of moral values, and their development of social competence (p. 303).

Parents should capitalize on these years when children are relatively dependent on them, and should use a parenting style that encourages children to be more receptive to their guidance and counsel.

White (1952) laments parental neglect and sensitizes parents to the importance of their role. She posits that no more important field of effort than that committed to the founders and guardians of the home could be found. No work entrusted to human beings involves greater or more far-reaching results than the work of parents. The home, in a significant way, helps to shape society: "To the lack of right home training may be traced the larger share of the disease, misery and crime that curse humanity. If the home life were pure and true, if the children who went forth from its care were prepared to meet life's responsibilities and dangers, what a change would be seen in the world" (pp. 182-183).

The importance of communicating love to children cannot be overemphasized. Whiteman and Peterson (1997) admonish parents to strike a balance between parental authority and maintaining the child's interests. They aver: "Even in the act of disciplining a child, you must communicate love. You hate the bad behavior and administer the appropriate punishment, but you love the child and want a good relationship. You must make this clear" (p. 306).

When a parent has built a strong bond and relationship with a child, it is time for that parent to begin preparing the child to make important decisions on sexual conduct and practice. Parents will be wise to utilize those years when their children look to them for guidance and direction. Time is important. The best and most effective time for education and training is the first seven years of a child's life. Parents should always be available to provide guidance and support.

*A Strategy to help Parents and Teachers Lay a Foundations for Academic Success
and Sexual Rectitude*

During the years from birth to adolescence (about 12 years to 19 years of age), an individual spends a significant amount of time laying an academic foundation. White (1952) reminds parents that the first school is the home where the educational influences may have a strong impact for good or for evil.

Subsequent to high school graduation, a student may take about four years of life to complete a Bachelor's Degree, and then has approximately 58 to 60 years to continue learning, working, and enjoying the fruits of having laid this foundation.

The teacher should recognize that she has the student for only four years. The lessons taught, if well done, would last a lifetime. The student may be difficult, unresponsive and unkind, but the teacher has the opportunity to work with him/her and show love in spite of the child's challenging behavior. Teachers do not just teach subjects, they teach students in preparing them to live successful lives. They must build bridges to their hearts. Once they have done this, teachers can help their students to grapple with some of their greatest challenges.

In an age of sexual revolution, Rice and Dolgin (2002) suggest that the adolescent is exposed to a variety of sexual practices both healthy and unhealthy. Students need a mentor who can guide them in a caring, loving manner through the maze they must walk. The teacher can help the students to deal with the sexual issues, which they must inevitably face. The teacher can utilize the timeline to illustrate this concept to the students. In effect, this approach is saying to the teacher "you have four years to make a difference, what will you do with this period? How will you use it in shaping the character of your students? What if their final destiny depended on your impact and influence? Are you, as a teacher, doing all you can to help your students develop to their fullest potential and develop healthy wholesome sexual values?" Parents have primary responsibilities in guiding their children to academic success and to making responsible, mature decisions on sexual issues. Teachers, though, need to be observant and ready to assist where needed.

*A Strategy to help Adolescents and Young Adults in the Crucial Years of Dealing with the
Challenge of Sexual Abstinence*

For approximately seven years -- between puberty and age 20 -- an individual faces one of the greatest challenges in understanding and dealing with sexuality. At puberty, the adolescent attains sexual maturity with its accompanying physiological changes. Adolescents are attracted to members of the opposite sex, and today we hear of the prevalence of same-sex attraction. Craig and Baucum (2002) posit that people respond to sexuality based on the cultural norms of the time and place in which they live. They refer to the sexual "revolution," a considerable change in sexual attitudes, of the 1970s:

By the late 1970s the sexual "revolution" was in full swing. In 1979 Catherine Chilman reviewed the findings of numerous studies and reported an increasing trend toward sexual liberalization, reflected both by an increase in sexual activity among adolescents and by a change in societal attitudes. Society at large -- not just young people -- had become more accepting of a wide range of sexual behaviors, including masturbation, same-sex sexual activity, and unmarried couples having sex (Dreyer, 1982). In another study (Hass, 1979), 83% of the boys and 64 % of the girls interviewed approved of premarital intercourse; 56 % of the boys and 44 % of the girls reported actually having had intercourse (p.390).

Craig and Baucum (2002) reported that although there was a trend toward more conservative attitudes about sexual matters in the late 1980s, sex was still considered an essential part of romance. Rice and Dolgin (2002) cite research findings that indicate the early involvement of the youth in premarital intercourse:

Not only are youths [sic] more likely to have premarital intercourse, but the age of their initial intercourse is years younger than in the recent past. Research indicates that half of all African American men have had intercourse by age 15, half of all Hispanic men by age 16 ½, and half of all White men by age 17. Half of all African American women have had intercourse by age 17, and half of all White and Hispanic women have had intercourse by age 18 (Michael, Gagnon, Laumann, and Kolata, (1994).

In this regard, White (1952) issued the following counsel:

Immorality abounds everywhere. Licentiousness is the special sin of the age. Never did vice lift its deformed head with such boldness as now. The people seem to be benumbed, and the lovers of virtue and true goodness are nearly discouraged by its boldness, strength, and prevalence. The iniquity, which abounds, is not merely confined to the unbeliever and the scoffer... Men and women who profess the religion of Christ are guilty . . . In this degenerate age many will be found who are so

blinded to the sinfulness of sin that they choose a licentious life because it suits the natural and perverse inclination of the heart (pp. 328-329).

Using the timeline, the presenter shows that seven years of abstinence (also referred to as seven years of famine) before marriage can lead to approximately 60 years of sexual enjoyment in marriage, without guilt and fear. When an individual is able to put life into the perspective of time, then the trials and temptations that come his or her way can be more readily understood, appreciated, confronted, and resisted.

The adolescent is helped to understand that ultimately he or she has some vital decisions to make. The choices made affect people's future lives and they will reap the consequences of their actions. He or she is not making decisions for his or her parents or teachers but for him or herself. Every appropriate decision made prepares him/her for a life of happiness. The teenager needs to understand that sexual abstinence delivers positive benefits and blessings. La Haye and La Haye (1998), and Wheat and Wheat (1997) note that many a man or woman fails to enjoy a healthy sexual experience because of guilt borne of premarital or extramarital affairs. In fact they noted that impotency, even among the young, is directly related to inappropriate sexual behavior. They also posit that there is a relationship between premature ejaculation and premarital sexual conduct. In other words premarital sexual conduct has the potential to interfere with sexual satisfaction in marriage. The following paragraphs are addressed to all students and other youth.

Sex in marriage can be likened to a gourmet meal with a table well spread. You can eat to your heart's satisfaction unhurriedly and without shame or guilt. To engage in premarital sex is analogous to someone on his/her way home to enjoy a well cooked and tasty meal laid on a beautifully and attractively set table. Only a short distance away from home the individual finds green mangoes. Instead of waiting to enjoy the meal the person fills his or her stomach with the green mangoes and spoils a good appetite. He or she is therefore unable to fully enjoy the meal.

When you wait for sexual enjoyment in marriage you are the one who benefits. You are almost there, just hold on. Your seven years of famine can give rise to "60 years of plenty sex" without the pain of guilt, shame or dissatisfaction. Whenever God says "don't" it is usually done with the benefit to the human family as the motive. God says that we should leave premarital sex alone. The fullest enjoyment of sexual practice will be found in the marriage relationship. Lack of sexual experience is not an inhibitor to good sexual practice in marriage (Wheat & Wheat,

1997). Some young folk may never get married and may seek to justify engaging in premarital sex. Such need to remember that the Bible admonishes that whatsoever one does should be done to God's Glory (1 Corinthians 10:31). That includes sexual conduct. Paul gives the reason why we should glorify God in our bodies. He says in 1 Corinthians 6:19,20 that our bodies are the temples of God. Hence, we are not at liberty to do as we want with our bodies since we are not our own. In fact, Paul informs us that we are bought with a price and should glorify God in our bodies. Whether an individual marries nor not, it is a prime necessity that appropriate sexual decisions are made. God made us, God loves us, and only tells us to do what is best for us. To abstain from sexual indulgence before marriage is for your benefit.

What if you have already engaged in premarital or extramarital sex? There is good news for you. God invites you to confess your sins (1 John 1:9). God is faithful and just to forgive you your sins and will cleanse you from all unrighteousness. God keeps His words, will not hold your past against you, but most importantly, He will cleanse you from all uncleanness. When God washes you, you are clean indeed. It is as though you have never sinned. That is tantamount to God giving you back your virginity. But He says "Go and sin no more" (John 8:11). Even more musical in your ear is that He does not condemn you for your past mistakes in sexual conduct (Jon 8:11). More than that God promises to keep you from falling back into similar practices in the future. The exciting news is that God will keep those chaste who have not committed sexual sins and will forgive and purify those who have.

Strategies that Teach the Importance of Preserving Sexual Purity

Purpose: Three illustrations will be used to dramatise the importance of preserving one's sexual purity or the need to remain chaste. The three demonstrations can all be done to reemphasize the point that once an individual engages in sexual intercourse or any part of the experience, the value and appeal of that one decreases in the eyes of fellow human beings. Once he or she confesses, God treats him or her as though he or she had not sinned. Each teaches the same lesson though from slightly different angles.

Materials: The first illustration uses two pieces of flowers that have petals. The second requires two washed apples and the third utilizes two washed, ripe and attractive bananas.

The next three illustrations focus on ways parents, youth leaders, or teachers can tastefully, openly, and candidly discuss the topic of sex in the life of an individual. These illustrations are useful for introducing the topic of sex at an early age.

Preserve Your Petals: Stay Chaste and Maintain Sexual Parity

Two volunteers are involved in this presentation. Two small pieces of flowers with petals are presented to the volunteers, preferably males. They both agree on the one to be chosen. They are given 90 seconds to manipulate or play with the chosen flower. They may pass it from hand to hand, remove the petals, or crush them. The flower deteriorates into an unattractive state. Both volunteers are then asked, "If you wanted a flower to keep permanently which one would you like to have, the manipulated one or the untouched one?" Invariably the choice is the one that was not crushed. Then, the presenter elicits from the audience inferences and conclusions about the moral lessons learned.

They learn that often when a person passes around from hand to hand, that his/her prospect of being chosen as a marital partner diminishes. They also learn that crushed petals are not easily repaired nor restored. The lesson is taught that temporary popularity does not guarantee permanent choice in relationships. The members of the audience are encouraged to preserve their petals intact.

It Tastes Great, but I Need Another

Youth need to be told the truth about the impact of the sexual revolution. Society today is more open to the discussion of sexual topics and the viewing of sexual images, which in turn encourage sexual activities among the young. However, students need to be taught about the spiritual, physical, emotional, and social impact of premarital sex and taught to be proactive and save themselves from regret. For example, Rice and Dolgin (2002) cite Pipher who documented the regret of two girls: "A girl from Kansas said, 'In fifth grade, my friends and I decided we would have sex with boys. Now we can't get our reputations back. Now we're sluts of the

school.’ Another girl remarked, ‘It’s confusing, you’re pressured to have sex but when you do, you’re a whore’” (Pipher, 1996). White (1952) discusses the implications of inappropriate sexual conduct and warns, “Mind, soul, body, and conscience are involved in the ruin” (p. 327).

Another illustration to bring home the point follows: The participants are presented with two washed apples, or some other available fruits. Two volunteers closely scrutinize them and then agree on the one they will choose. They both take one bite of the fruit selected. They eat the bitten off pieces. They are asked about the taste—whether they enjoyed it. They are then asked to choose the fruit they would like to take with them. Invariably the answer is the unbitten one, even though they did not taste it. The lesson is tactfully taught. Once we are bitten or sampled sexually our value in the eyes of the sampler seems to diminish.

How important to teach the youth the importance of the exercise of will power as opposed to responding emotionally to sexual impulses. Dobson (1993) explains how unreliable it is to trust our emotions:

No, we can’t depend on our feelings and passions to govern our lives or assess the world around us. Emotions are unreliable -- biased -- whimsical. They lie as often as they tell the truth. They are manipulated by hormones -- especially in the teen years -- and they wobble dramatically from early morning, when we’re rested, to the evening, when we’re tired. One of the evidences of emotional maturity is the ability (and the willingness) to overrule ephemeral feelings and govern our behavior with the intellect and the will (pp. 46-47).

Breaking the Seal

Craig and Baucum (2002) provide the decline in moral standards due to the sexual revolution:

The sexual revolution affected girls’ behavior much more than it did boys’: Even in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, between one-third and two-thirds of teenage boys reportedly had already lost their virginity -- a statistic comparable to that reported in the 1970s. In contrast, the proportion of 16-year-old girls reporting having lost their virginity rose from 7% in the 1940s to 33% in 1971 and 44% in 1982 (Brooks-Gunn & Furstenberg, 1989) (p. 390).

Now for the third illustration: In order to teach lessons on the positive benefits of sexual abstinence, two bananas are used. Two volunteers, males or females or a combination of male and female, are invited to participate. The volunteers select an agreed upon a banana that they

both tamper with. They may choose to peel, eat, or break it. Afterward, they are asked to choose between both bananas to take away. Invariably, they choose the untouched banana.

This illustration acts as a stimulus for discussion about sexual abstinence. The audience discusses the following vital lessons on sexual abstinence. Once our seal is broken it cannot be physically restored. Human beings, once they have a choice, prefer that which is unblemished. Wait to partake of that which is yours.

Strategy to Teach the Right Time to Open the Gift of Sexual Intercourse

The Purpose: The purpose of this strategy is to help singles to realize that sexual intimacies rightly belong in marriage. Sexual intercourse is more than penetration, it is a package. This package should be kept sealed until it is delivered at the time of marriage. It is also intended to teach that once individuals begin tampering with the gift of sex even, so slightly, they never know how far they may ultimately go in opening the gift before they deliver the gift to the receiver.

Materials: A very attractively wrapped gift is tied with a ribbon and completed with a bow attached. Five persons of one gender and one of the other are also needed.

We usually give gifts to our loved ones, friends, and colleagues for special occasions. The receiver opens the gift on the occasion for which it is given. The following illustration is intended to teach that sex is a package, which should be opened only by the ones who ultimately receive the gift in marriage.

Five males and one female will act as volunteers for this illustration. The female in the illustration will get married to one of the males. Before she meets him, she meets four other young men with whom she becomes physically involved, ranging from touching, fondling, kissing, though maybe there was never sexual penetration. A gift box, beautifully and attractively wrapped, is partially unwrapped each time the female becomes involved with physical intimacy. Bit by bit, the beautifully wrapped gift has been stripped of bow, ribbon and part of the gift paper. The female participant finally meets the man with whom she will unite her life. She presents him on his wedding night with a gift that has been significantly tampered with. The audience awaits his spontaneous reaction. The man usually says something that shows his disappointment over the tampered gift.

The illustration generates much laughter and emotional involvement. The lesson is powerful. The audience gets a visual impact of what happens when individuals begin sharing physical intimacies both inappropriately and in an untimely manner.

White (1952) gives very useful counsel to all as we seek to make wise decisions about our lives and our sexual behaviors. She cautions: “Do not place yourselves needlessly in the society of those who by their acts would weaken your purpose to do right, or bring a stain upon your conscience. Do nothing among strangers, in the street, on the cars, or in the home, that would have the least appearance of evil. Do something everyday to improve, beautify, and ennoble the life that Christ has purchased with His own blood. Always act from principle, never from impulse” (p. 491).

According to 1 Corinthians 7: 2-5, the husband has no power over the husband’s body. The New International Vision says in verse 4 of the same chapter: “The wife’s body does not belong to her alone, but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband’s body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife.” The presenter reminds the audience of this biblical concept. Since the husband and wife respectively “owns” each other’s body, then before the prospective husband and wife meet, they should preserve and protect their bodies for each other. They are not at liberty to do what they want with their bodies since these are entrusted to their care to be preserved for their spouses.

The liberal views on sexuality today make it imperative for parents and educators to frequently emphasize the Biblical perspective that we are fearfully and wonderfully made; that sex is pleasurable; and that the right time to break the “seal” is in marriage. According to Wheat and Wheat (1997), God made our bodies with intense, wonderful physical sensations, but for husbands and wives to enjoy together. Rosenau (2002) describes sexuality as God’s grand metaphor for intimacy in marriage and postulates for consideration, “God has a fantastic formula for your sex life: An Intimate Marriage + Mature Lovers = A Fulfilling Sex Life” (p. ix). It is so important that educators communicate this to students in a Christian context to counteract the distorted images portrayed by Hollywood and the media.

Conclusion

Parents, pastors, teachers, pathfinder leaders, and other youth leaders all have sacred responsibilities in promoting an atmosphere, or climate for the youth to grow, mature and develop sexually as well as in other areas of their lives. When parents and leaders have a fuller understanding of the concept of the integration of faith and learning, they will seek to discuss the issue of sex more openly. Sex is so central to adolescents and young adults, that it is a colossal mistake for the home, church, or school to treat it as of little importance. Each has a primary responsibility to help the young to take a correct approach to sex and sexuality. As so often happens, one of these three institutions may fail, hence the others should be ready to compensate for the failure. The home should be the first line of defense to forestall the creeping erosion to the sanctity of sex in marriage.

The church and school ought to be prepared to make up any deficiencies exhibited by the home. The young should not be left to chart this course alone. In this sense, the strategies and illustrations provide ample support for all parents and other leaders, who lead and train the young. Leaders need to present all discourses on sex in a tasteful, candid, simple, yet comprehensive a manner as possible. The strategies provide that opportunity.

Covey (1990) indicates that private victories precede public ones. I take this here to mean that victory in one's public sexual behaviors will emanate out of the victories one has found in his personal life and in the quality of one's character development. When one builds sexual thoughts and conducts on a foundation of sound character and moral principles, public success will follow. We do not need to be victims of circumstances.

Leaders, which also include parents, need to impress upon the young that in spite of the overt and graphic display of sex everywhere, each youth has a divine responsibility and support to act responsibly. Jude says that God can keep us from falling (vs 24). Jesus says "go and sin no more" (John 8:11) in direct reference to inappropriate sexual behaviors. The adolescent and youth must accept full responsibility for their sexual actions. God says that the young are strong when the word of God abides in them; then are they able to overcome the wicked one (1 John 2:12-14). Chalmers (2005) observes that brain scientists made the discovery that thought and actions that are often repeated build boutons (tiny enlargement at the junction of synapse that secrete various chemicals that close the tiny gap and stimulate the next cell to send the message

on) so that it becomes easier to repeat the next thought or habit the next time. One must build new pathways by choosing different responses to change a habit that is formed (found in Kuzma, 2005).

Each individual needs to determine with what he or she feeds the mind. If the mind has been fed inappropriate materials the spirit can aid the willing to make new and more appreciate choices. Covey (1990) contends “between stimuli and response man has the power to choose” (p.70). No man or woman is a victim of circumstances. All need to understand that humans are not victims of genetic, psychic, or environmental determinism. All humans have the capacity for choice and for change. First we need to change our attitude toward our behaviors. The change is exemplified by our choice of vocabulary. Instead of saying that we “can’t” change certain practices, we need to be honest and say that we “won’t” change them. This change in attitude would provide a platform for change in behavior. Wheat and Okes Pekins (1980) quotes Minirth and Meier who note “if an individual changes all his can’ts to won’ts, he stops avoiding the truth, quits deceiving himself, and starts living in reality...” (p. 333). It is Jesus Himself who says “With God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26). The Apostle Paul agrees in Philippians 4:13, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

It is time for parents, teachers and other youth leaders to openly, honestly and transparently bring the topic of sex out of the closet and make it a matter for discussion. From my own experience, young people are eagerly waiting for adults to deal with this issue in an open and honest manner.

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