

What's the Big Deal?

Why God Cares About Sex

STAN AND BRENNAN JONES



NAV PRESS®

BRINGING TRUTH TO LIFE

Sample from *What's the Big Deal?* / ISBN 1-60006-016-1

Copyright © 2006 NavPress Publishing. All rights reserved. To order copies of this resource, come back to www.navpress.com.



OUR GUARANTEE TO YOU

We believe so strongly in the message of our books that we are making this quality guarantee to you. If for any reason you are disappointed with the content of this book, return the title page to us with your name and address and we will refund to you the list price of the book. To help us serve you better, please briefly describe why you were disappointed. Mail your refund request to: NavPress, P.O. Box 35002, Colorado Springs, CO 80935.

The Navigators is an international Christian organization. Our mission is to advance the gospel of Jesus and His kingdom into the nations through spiritual generations of laborers living and discipling among the lost. We see a vital movement of the gospel, fueled by prevailing prayer, flowing freely through relational networks and out into the nations where workers for the kingdom are next door to everywhere.

NavPress is the publishing ministry of The Navigators. The mission of NavPress is to reach, disciple, and equip people to know Christ and make Him known by publishing life-related materials that are biblically rooted and culturally relevant. Our vision is to stimulate spiritual transformation through every product we publish.

© 1995, 2007 by Stanton and Brenna Jones

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without written permission from NavPress, P.O. Box 35001, Colorado Springs, CO 80935.

www.navpress.com

NAVPRESS, BRINGING TRUTH TO LIFE, and the NAVPRESS logo are registered trademarks of NavPress. Absence of ® in connection with marks of NavPress or other parties does not indicate an absence of registration of those marks.

ISBN-13: 978-1-60006-016-8

ISBN-10: 1-60006-016-1

Cover design by Charles Brock/www.thedesignworksgroup.com

Cover photo by www.jupiterimages.com

Illustration on page 49 by Suzanne Edmonds

Creative Team: Terry Behimer, Susan Martins Miller, Cara Iverson, Kathy Mosier, Arvid Wallen, Bob Bubnis

Some of the anecdotal illustrations in this book are true to life and are included with the permission of the persons involved. All other illustrations are composites of real situations, and any resemblance to people living or dead is coincidental.

Unless otherwise identified, all Scripture quotations in this publication are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation (NLT), copyright © 1996, 2004. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved. Other versions used include: the *New American Standard Bible* (NASB), © The Lockman Foundation 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 94-67237

Printed in the United States of America

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 / 11 10 09 08 07

FOR A FREE CATALOG OF NAVPRESS BOOKS & BIBLE STUDIES,
CALL 1-800-366-7788 (USA) OR 1-800-839-4769 (CANADA)

To Brandon, Emily, and Canon

Sample from *What's the Big Deal?* / ISBN 1-60006-016-1

Copyright © 2006 NavPress Publishing. All rights reserved. To order copies of this resource, come back to www.navpress.com.



CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	9
The GOD’S DESIGN FOR SEX Series.....	11
Chapter 1 What’s the Big Deal?	19
Chapter 2 Why Do People Do That?	25
Chapter 3 Sex Outside of Marriage	31
Chapter 4 What Does God Say About It?	37
Chapter 5 The Changes of Puberty	45
Chapter 6 What Is a Period?	51
Chapter 7 Why Can’t I Do That?	55
Chapter 8 What Does Gay Mean?	61
Chapter 9 What Is AIDS?	67
Chapter 10 What Is Sexual Abuse?	73
Chapter 11 God’s Response to Wrong.....	81
Chapter 12 Growing Up	87
About the Authors	91

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Each of our children's books benefited greatly from the editorial wisdom of Cathy Davis (for the first versions) and Susan Martins Miller (for the revised versions). Sanna Baker and Carolyn Nystrom provided helpful comments on the first draft of *The Story of Me*, and Lisa, Mark, and Anna McMinn read and gave very helpful feedback on early drafts of *What's the Big Deal?*

We express heartfelt thanks to the many parents who have shared their stories and perspectives, praise and disagreements, about the content of the GOD'S DESIGN FOR SEX series as we have spoken and taught about this subject around the world. Some of your stories have made it into the revised versions of these books!

Special appreciation goes out to Mark and Lori Yarhouse for their extraordinarily thorough and helpful review of the GOD'S DESIGN FOR SEX series in preparation for revisions for this new edition, to Elaine Roberts for a remarkably thorough and wise review of all of the children's books, and to Steve Gerali for his careful review of *Facing the Facts*.

Finally, we want to express our deep appreciation and love to our three children, Jennifer, Brandon, and Lindsay. You have, together and individually, enriched our lives far beyond what we could have ever imagined. Thank you for being our living laboratory for working out these ideas, for being so thoughtful and strong, and for loving us all these years.

Sample from *What's the Big Deal?* / ISBN 1-60006-016-1

Copyright © 2006 NavPress Publishing. All rights reserved. To order copies of this resource, come back to www.navpress.com.

THE GOD'S DESIGN FOR SEX SERIES

Parents, God gave you your sexuality as a precious gift. God gave your children sexuality as well. If handled responsibly, God's gift of sexuality to your child will be a source of blessing and delight.

How can parents help make this happen?

Many forces will push your children to make bad choices about sex. From their earliest years, children are bombarded by destructive, false messages about the nature of sexual intimacy. These messages come through music, television, the Internet, discussions with their friends, school sex-education programs, and so forth. The result? Distressing rates of sexual experimentation, teen pregnancy, abortion, sexually transmitted disease, divorce, and devastated lives.

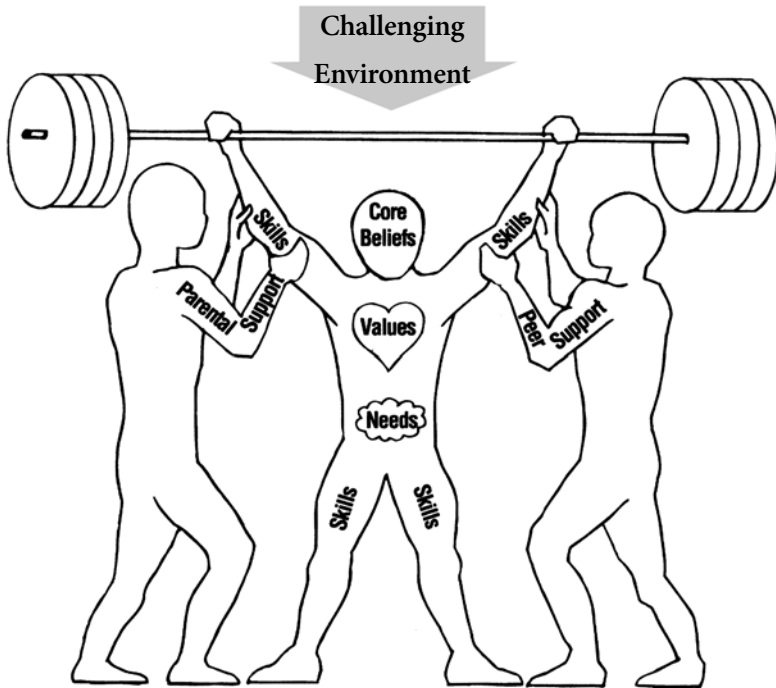
We believe that God means for Christian parents to be the primary sex educators of their children. First messages are the most powerful; why wait until your child hears the wrong thing and then try to correct the misunderstanding? Sexuality is a beautiful gift; why not present it to children the way God intended? Why not establish yourself as the trusted expert to whom your children can turn to find out God's truth about sexuality?

The GOD'S DESIGN FOR SEX series helps 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.

Sample from *What's the Big Deal?* / ISBN 1-60006-016-1

Copyright © 2006 NavPress Publishing. All rights reserved. To order copies of this resource, come back to www.navpress.com.

How young people handle sexuality in the teen years and beyond is a result of the following five key areas of development. The earlier we start helping children see themselves—including their sexuality—as God does, the stronger they will be as they enter the turbulent teenage years.



- **Needs:** Young people starved for love are more likely to seek having their needs met through sexual experimentation than kids who know they are loved. Strengthening your children’s sexual character starts with fostering close parent-child relationships, assisting the development of healthy friendships, and building hope for a meaningful future of personal significance.
- **Values:** Do we teach children to value purity and obedience to God? Or do we let kids learn from the world about immediate pleasure, looking “cool,” and fitting in?
- **Beliefs:** Our young people know the core biological facts, but do they also understand how God Himself looks at sex and where sexuality fits into what it means to be a godly man or woman?

- **Skills:** Are we giving our children the abilities to resist peer pressure, stand up for what is right, build meaningful friendships, and form loving relationships as adults?
- **Supports:** Are we helping children grow in the right direction by keeping our relationships with them strong and loving? Are we helping them plug into a vibrant faith community that encourages them to grow and stay close to Jesus?

GOD'S DESIGN FOR SEX is a series of books you can read with your children at ages three to five, five to eight, eight to eleven, and eleven to fourteen. The parents' resource manual, *How and When to Tell Your Kids About Sex: A Lifelong Approach to Shaping Your Child's Sexual Character*, offers a comprehensive understanding of what parents can do to shape their children's sexual character. We don't avoid the hardest subjects, such as sexual abuse or homosexuality. Our goals are to:

- help you understand your role in shaping your children's views, attitudes, and beliefs about sexuality;
- establish God's view of sexuality;
- discuss how to explain and defend the traditional Christian view of sexual morality in these modern times;
- explore how you can most powerfully influence your children to live a life of sexual chastity; and
- equip you to provide your children with the strength necessary to stand by their commitments to traditional Christian morality.

As we've taught and written about the principles for godly, parent-directed sex education in the Christian home, we've heard from parents over and over again, "I think you are right that I should have such conversations, but I don't think I can talk to my children that way. I wish there were something we could read with our children to get us started in discussing these matters."

The children's books in this series are designed to meet that need. They are meant not to provide all the information kids need but rather

to be starting points for Christian parents to discuss sexuality with their children in a manner appropriate to each age. They provide an anchor point for discussions, a jump start to get discussions going. They put the words in your mouths and put the issues out on the table. Don't simply hand these books to your kids to read, because our whole point is to empower you as the parent to shape your children's sexual character. The books are meant to guide the conversations with your children that will deepen your impact on them in the area of sexuality.

Why start early? Because if you as the parent are not teaching your kids about sexuality, they are learning distorted lessons about it from television, the Internet, and playground conversations. If you stand silent on sex while the rest of the world is abuzz about it, kids come to the conclusion that you cannot help them in this key area. If you start now in teaching godly, truthful, tactful, and appropriate lessons about sexuality, your children will trust you more and see you as a mother or father who tells the truth!

BOOK ONE (AGES THREE TO FIVE): *THE STORY OF ME*

Our most important task with the young child is to lay a spiritual foundation for the child's understanding of sexuality. God loves the human body (and the whole human person) and called it "very good" (Genesis 1:31). Children must see not only their bodies but also their sexual organs as gifts from God.

Young children can begin to develop a wondrous appreciation for God's splendid gift of sexuality by understanding some of the basics of human reproduction, so in this book we discuss the growth of a child inside a mother's body and the birth process. 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 as God's intended framework for the nurture and love of children. If you are reading with an adopted child, you'll have an opportunity to talk about how God sometimes creates families that way. We hope you will find *The Story of Me* a wonderful starting point for discussing sexuality with your young child.

BOOK TWO (AGES FIVE TO EIGHT): *BEFORE I WAS BORN* (BY CAROLYN NYSTROM)

Before I Was Born again 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 change as boys and girls become men and women and a tactful but direct explanation of sexual intercourse between a husband and wife.

If you are reading with an adopted child, use this opportunity to explain that not every couple will have children. If a baby doesn't grow in the mother's womb, the couple might look for a baby or older child to adopt. The birth mother knows that the husband and wife will love their adopted child. This is another way God makes families.

BOOK THREE (AGES EIGHT TO ELEVEN): *WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL? WHY GOD CARES ABOUT SEX*

This book does three things. First, it reinforces the messages of our first two children's books: the basics of sexual intercourse and the fundamental goodness of our sexuality. Second, it continues the task of deliberately building your child's understanding of why God intends sexual intercourse to be reserved for marriage. Third, it helps 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 *not* try to completely shelter their children from the destructive moral messages of the world. Children who grow up in environments where they are never exposed to germs grow up with depleted and ineffectual immune systems for resisting disease. When we shelter them too much, we leave them naive and vulnerable, and we risk communicating that the negative messages of the world are so powerful that Christians cannot even talk about them.

But nor should we just let our kids be inundated with the destructive messages of the world. The principle of inoculation suggests that we should deliberately expose kids to the contrary moral messages they will hear from the world. It should be in *our homes* that our kids first learn that many people in our world do not believe in reserving

sex for marriage, and this should also be where they get their first understanding of such problems as teenage pregnancy, AIDS, and homosexuality. But they should be exposed to these realities for a vital purpose: to build their defenses against these terrible problems of our culture.

BOOK FOUR (AGES ELEVEN TO FOURTEEN): *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 in the three previous books but will further prepare your child for puberty. Your child is now old enough for more detailed information about the changes his or her body is about to go through and about the adult body that is soon to be presented as a gift from God. Your child also needs to be reminded about God's view of sexuality, 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 our children must be prepared to face views and beliefs contrary to those we are teaching them at home. We attempt to do all this while also talking about the many confusing feelings of puberty and early adolescence. Your child can read this book independently; we encourage you to read it as well and then talk about it together.

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

We have also chosen not to add endnotes with documentation to the children's books. If a specific statement from these books interests you or your child ("Is it really true that almost a million teenagers get

pregnant every year?”), you can likely find an endnote directing you to more information in our parents’ guidebook, *How and When to Tell Your Kids About Sex*.

We hope these books will be valuable tools in raising a new generation of faithful Christian young people who will have healthy, positive, accepting attitudes about their own sexuality; who will live confident, chaste lives as faithful witnesses to the work of Christ in their lives while they are single; and who will then live fulfilled, loving, rewarding lives as spouses, should they choose to marry.

WHAT'S THE **BIG** DEAL?

SUGGESTION TO FAMILIES:

If your child is a good reader, why not have your child read the parts where Sam and Amy are talking, and you, the parent, read the Mom and Dad parts? All of the material covered is important for both boys and girls. And remember, these written conversations hopefully will start even more conversations between you and your child about God's design for sex.



SAM: Dad, what's the big deal about sex? Why do people talk and joke so much about sex, like on TV and stuff?



DAD: Well, it's confusing, but I will try to explain it as best I can. First, remember we've said that sex is a wonderful gift from God. God did a marvelous thing making men and women, girls and boys, different from each other. Our bodies are a gift from God. When husbands and wives share their bodies together in sexual intercourse, it is only one of the ways they share their love, but it is a wonderful way. So one reason why sex is such a big deal is because sex is a glorious gift from God.



AMY: But it doesn't seem like people are talking a lot about sex because it's a gift from God!



DAD: You got me there! I'm glad you are thinking about this enough to see that. I guess what I meant was that sex is important in everyone's life because God made us that way: He made us men and women with special and different bodies, and He made adults so that they are interested in sex. God made sex, so it *is* a big deal.

But most of the reasons people make such a big deal about sex are bad reasons, not good ones. Sex is a big deal because when people don't use God's gift the right way, bad consequences often result. When people use the good gift of sex the way God meant it to be used, it is much more likely to have a beautiful and wonderful result. Sex is a big deal because so many people can be hurt by sex.



SAM: What kinds of bad things can happen?



MOM: Here's one example. Whenever a couple has sexual intercourse, the woman might get pregnant. A baby might start to grow in her womb. If the man and woman are married, usually this is a happy time. They feel like celebrating, and it draws them even closer together in love.

But if the woman who has sex and gets pregnant is a fourteen-year-old girl, usually she is not happy about the situation. She may have to raise a baby without a husband. Her whole life changes: her dreams about finishing high school, dating, going to college. God meant for pregnancy and giving birth to be wonderful, something worth celebrating. But having a baby is something many people dread because they didn't save sex for marriage.



DAD: Misusing God's gift of sex also spreads some diseases. Did you know that if a man and a woman never have sex with anyone except each other, those two people have almost no chance of ever getting any diseases from sex? But because so many young people today are not waiting to get married before they have sex, these terrible diseases are becoming more common.



If you use God's gift correctly, treating it like a beautiful gift, you can be wonderfully happy that God made you a boy or a girl. But when people misuse sex, it almost always hurts people. Did you know that almost one million teenage girls get pregnant every year? Did you know that many teenagers are getting sexual diseases because they do not follow God's rules?



AMY: That sounds terrible!



MOM: Another reason sex is a big deal is because some people make it more important than it should be. Do you remember what the Bible says about idolatry? People commit idolatry when they take something God made and then treat it as though it is a god. In the Old Testament, God hated it when people took things He made, like rocks and trees and gold, and then worshiped those things. Someone once said that when people stop believing in the real God, they start believing that other things can take God's place.

Many things take the place of God in people's lives today—like money, power, or being famous. Sex is sort of like a god for some people today. They think that sex will make them happy, or they think sex is the most important thing in life. But only God can make us truly happy, and only God deserves to be the most important thing in our lives. So when they try to get happy by having as much sex as possible or by breaking God's rules about sex, they usually find they are not happy at all.



AMY: I think I understand that, but why do people joke about sex so much?



DAD: It may be to cover up or express their disappointment in sex. In a lot of TV shows and movies, people talk about sex, joke about sex, think about sex all the time. I worry that these shows teach kids and grown-ups that sex is worth thinking about all the time. We Christians think sex is a wonderful gift, but it was not meant to

take the place of God in our lives. And thinking about sex all the time or making sex the most important thing in our lives can never make us happy.



SAM: But why do kids joke about sex so much?



MOM: I think it's because they hear how adults, especially on TV and in the movies, talk about it a lot. But the kids don't really know for sure what the adults are talking about or why. So the kids are really curious about it, but they're nervous because they don't really understand it. Also—and I hope this isn't true for you two—many kids can't talk openly with their parents about sex. So they joke about it because they don't understand how God made it special, and they can't just talk normally with their parents about it because they are embarrassed about sex.



DAD: But now let me tell you why I think sex needs to be a big deal for us. We want to teach you the truth about sex so you will be ready to make the right decisions about it as a teenager and as an adult. Please always feel free to ask us any questions that come to your mind, because we won't be able to think of everything you need to know. And we won't always know the answers to questions! We might need to think about it awhile before we answer you, but that's okay. We may even need to ask someone or read to find the answer, but we would be glad to do that. It is important for us to keep talking about this topic. We love you so much that we want you to learn about how God made us and meant for us to live, even when it isn't easy to talk about.

SOME QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- 1 *When have you heard kids joke about sex?
Why do you think they do that?*
- 2 *What have you noticed about the way television and movies talk about sex?*
- 3 *What do you think about God making you a sexual person?*