

PARENTING WITH PURPOSE



Six ways to
create real connection
with your kids.

INCLUDES ADVICE FROM



BILL JOHNSON
When Heaven Invades Earth



DANNY SILK
Keep Your Love on



DR. KIRK ELLIOTT
Founder of TodaysAmerica.com



Wm. PAUL YOUNG
The Shack

INTRO

My intentions in creating this book were to bring together some of my favorite leaders on the topic of parenting to help the dozens of people I speak to on a monthly basis starving for sound advice in raising their children.

However, as this resource has developed, it quickly surpassed my expectations. It has become a wealth of parenting wisdom that I believe is sure to help you bring the Kingdom of God closer to your children.

As you read, you will discover ways of thinking, practical skills and revelations to help you raise connected & powerful children.

I'm honored to have had the following friends and leaders contribute:

- Bill Johnson, Author of *When Heaven Invades Earth* & Senior leader of Bethel Church
- Wm. Paul Young, Author of *The Shack*, *Cross Roads* & *Eve*.
- Kris Vallotton, Author of *Fashioned to Reign*
- Shawn Bolz, Author of *Translating God*
- Dr. Kirk
- And yours truly.

The book explores a variety of parenting topics and hacks, such as:

- Moving out of controlling your child and into creating real & lasting connection with them...
- Raising kids with the mentality & courage to change the world around them...
- The most authentic way to "train our kids in the way they should go..."
- Helping your kids develop healthy sexuality...
- And more...

There is lots of fun to be had in the following pages. I truly hope you find this resource as a lifeline for how to best raise emotionally, spiritually and relationally healthy kids!

Enjoy!



Author of Loving Our Kids On Purpose & Keep Your Love On

PS) If interested in next steps beyond this resource, I'd love to have you join The Life Academy! We even have a community of people learning & discussing parenting practices like the ones discussed in this book! To learn more, visit

LOPLifeAcademy.com! (Or see below!)

Life Academy

Online courses designed to help you change the world in and around you.

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Online courses by Danny Silk and his team

Danny Silk & his team collectively have over 30 years of helping families to be healthy. They've compiled this 24 video curriculum to help you thrive and be healthy in every area of your life!



PARENTING TRACK

Learn to empower your kids through connection, to live responsibly and powerfully.

Children are powerful. In a world where parents are taught to control their children through external rules and punishments, Jesus points to a better way—the way of teaching children to be governed from the inside through the law of love. Find the tools you need to partner with God in seeing the children around you live full and empowered lives.

[LEARN MORE!](#)



INSTILLING VALUES IN YOUR CHILD

By BILL JOHNSON

For me, the greatest of all privileges in life is to be a parent. It is the great call of God on my life that I never take for granted. It is with fear and trembling, along with joy and adventure, that Beni and I have embraced this assignment for our lives.

In the following few paragraphs, I want to give some simple suggestions that might help you to parent well.

Children need encouragement from those who believe in them. That encouragement helps to shape their view of themselves and their understanding of the future. The encouragement needs to be as specific as possible so they know you're doing more than trying to be positive. Complimenting them on their abilities and gifts is good. Commending them for who they are is even better. Do both.

They also need models to follow. If they don't have models in the home that are worth following, they'll find their own outside of the home, and that is seldom good. For example, our passion for God must be practically displayed in the home in equal measure to what we display in a corporate worship service. If there's a discrepancy between our public passion and what they see at home, they tend to follow the lesser.

Children learn what's important to us by seeing what we get excited about in their lives –both negatively and positively. I remember watching one of my sons treating his brother with unusual kindness. I stopped him and said, “Son, do you know what that was?”

He looked at me like he was in trouble.

“That was kindness!” I continued, “That is a fruit of the Spirit. Great job on how you treated your brother.”

I've been told that it takes seven positive comments to recover from one negative comment. Most households would improve if there were *one* positive comment for every negative comment. We must make changes here.

When my children brought their report cards home, the first two things I looked at were how they were graded in “Attitude” and “Bible.” (They went to a Christian school in their grade school years.) I could handle any grade in any other class if I knew they were responsible in their attitudes and devotion to Scripture. This proved to be a valuable approach to schooling for us and for them. They knew what I expected by what I inspected. Their other grades were always good if these two areas were good.

We also intentionally exposed our children to the needs of the poor. Sometimes that meant helping strangers who stopped by our house. We lived on a main highway, and people would stop by needing food or a place to stay. In one case, some people even lived with us for a short season.

Compassion, kindness, and humility were things we championed. Children don't learn

those qualities through sermons; they learn them through a model. Keeping our children exposed to world need is vital to shaping their hearts for divine purpose. To hurt for those who are hurting is normal. My job is to expose them to other people's pain, in the measure that shapes them well.

Also important to me was to expose my children to how the “community of the redeemed” functions. We often sat in the living room with many other friends, of every age. Sometimes I would point to an individual and ask, “What would you think God is doing in this person's life?”

My kids were eager to hear the voice of the Lord for other people and were often the first to speak. We didn't make it spooky or hard. They would come up with profound insights into what they felt God was saying to that individual. Children aren't the church of tomorrow. They are the church of today and must be treated with that kind of value. The exposure to community life with other believers helped shaped their values for people and really helped them in their quest to “always find the gold in people's hearts.”

The last thing I'll mention here is my commitment to always expose my children to the move of God. Exposure to the supernatural activities of heaven has always been a supreme value for me. If it meant that I took them to another city for meetings or we kept them up past their bedtime in order to see the powerful things that God was doing, I would do it. That is a decision I've never regretted. Exposure to right things wakes up the God-given appetite for the authentic gospel of power and purity. But it was an intentional exposure on our part.

The bottom line is we train our children by deliberate actions and by exposure. We

devote ourselves to model a love for God that is practical and tangible. Shaping their hearts with the powerful force of compassion comes into play when we served broken people together. Since we are members of one another, exposing children to how community functions provides them with some of their most vital lessons. And finally, exposure to the work of the Holy Spirit creates a standard for life. The result is that they will never be satisfied with anything less than an authentic work of God—in them, and through them.

Be encouraged. You have a perfect Father, who is delighted to reveal His ways to us so that we might reveal them to those around us.



Bill Johnson
Author of *When Heaven Invades Earth*

Bill Johnson is a fifth-generation pastor with a rich heritage in the Holy Spirit.

Together Bill and his wife serve a growing number of churches that have partnered for revival. Bill and Brenda (Beni) Johnson are the senior pastors of Bethel Church, Redding, California. All three of their children and spouses are involved in full time ministry. They also have four wonderful grandchildren.

Learn more here: www.bjm.org

BUILDING CONNECTION WITH YOUR CHILD

By SHAWN BOLZ

When my parents got married, became believers, and had children, they agreed that they didn't want to repeat the mistakes of their own parents. My grandparents, aunts, and uncles were all good people, but they didn't understand how to build relational connection.

My father's family was so disconnected growing up that by the time my parents had us, we only saw his twin brother every four to five years. My dad had to fight for acquaintanceship with both his brothers and initiate a "State of the Union" call with them once a year.

My mother's mom was a divorced single mother, and was more focused on survival than connection with my mom and her sister. As a result, my mom became extremely independent. From age twelve, she was more of an adult than a kid.

My parents' commitment to raise their children with nurture and connection became much deeper after the loss of their second child. They valued my sister Jennifer and me in a profound way, found great joy in us, and built connection with us in several important ways. I have another awesome sister, Cindy who is 11 years older than me

and also benefited by my parent's choices, I just didn't get to see their parenting in action the same way with her.

CONNECTION KEY #1: Create Space and Time and Be Ritualistic About It!

First, my parents built family rituals into the flow of our lives. We celebrated holidays together, spent Saturdays as family days, did a Bible study together once a week, and had family Fridays where we would eat together and go to the movies, or invite friends over to watch movies at home and spend the night. Our friends often told us they liked our family more than their own, and some all but lived with us.

I actually don't remember many of our times together as a family, but I remember always feeling connected to my parents and sister. During my awkward preteen and teen years, I occasionally pulled away from connection with my parents. However, they didn't reciprocate. They continued to keep the momentum of ritual and sharing space and time together. As a result, when I didn't want to share with them what I was going through, they could feel it, and I could feel that they could feel it. Eventually, I was compelled to share because of how involved I felt they were in my heart process.

The time we spent together made sure they never felt foreign to my process or life journey. Rather, they were narrators in it. Many of our normal get-together times turned into deep conversations that just wouldn't have happened if we hadn't established consistent time together.

I once read a psychology book on family, which affirmed how important ritual is in celebrating holidays or sharing dinners at the table. Routine connection helps to keep family members present in each other's lives for the more important moments. This is

truer today than ever before. For many families, their only intentional quality time is spent driving to soccer practice or going to church. In doing so, they risk losing the hearts of their children. Parents must intentionally and deliberately set aside time with their children for no other purpose than to say, “You are my priority and I am spending time to prove it. I won’t compromise the quality and or quantity of this time. Because we do life together, we will share life together.”

CONNECTION KEY #2: Vulnerability

I can still remember a conversation my mom had with Jennifer and me when we were about seven and nine.

“I am realizing that my mom didn’t know how to discipline me at all, so she just would express anger and frustration and yell, hoping I would change,” she told us. “I don’t want to do that with you guys, but I feel like I am repeating her model sometimes. I really want God to change me. I am going to read some books and work on learning how to discipline the healthy way.”

My sister and I were comforted by our mother sharing her process with us. She was a great mom, but like any human, she had weaknesses, and this one had been blaring in our faces.

She then asked us, “What is something God is showing you that you need to change?”

In my case, I knew that I had been lying a lot. After seeing my mom be vulnerable and brave with us, I admitted this to her.

Instead of being mad at me, she said, “I am so proud of you. We all know you have been

lying about some things, but for you to admit that and want to change is awesome!
Let's do this!"

Mom modeled that she wasn't afraid to be in a process in her journey, or to confess that great big parts of her were still under construction. She didn't mind our process either.

My dad modeled the same kind of vulnerability. When I was eleven years old, some friends and I discovered pornography on a trail in the back woods. I immediately ran home and told my dad all about it. What eleven-year-old does that? One who cherishes their relationship! I knew he wouldn't be mad, and I knew he would teach me about what just happened.

My father was so vulnerable about his own process with pornography and what it does in a man's life. He told me about a season in which he had looked at pornography and how it had made him feel distant from my mom. He then explained to me that as men, we are called to protect women, and that I needed to see those women for who they really are.

"What if they were your mom or sister?" he asked me. "Wouldn't you be mad at people for looking at them that way? These women may not have value for themselves, but you can sure protect them by not objectifying them."

That may sound pretty intense for an eleven-year-old, but hearing his journey was so powerful to me! I was deeply motivated to learn from his mistakes and his heart, and made healthy choices in that area from that point on. To this day, I have never had a porn addiction in my life.

Kids want to do better than their parents, whom they idolize. And when their parents

have their hearts, they want to protect their parents at all costs. Connected children often don't repeat the mistakes of their parents because they feel connected to the learning journey that has enabled their parents to overcome. As a matter of fact, connected kids often don't struggle with addictions, social anxiety, purpose depression, or relational loneliness.

CONNECTION KEY #3: Teaching Heart Communication

My parents made sure to teach my sister and me how to share our hearts by modeling it themselves and asking us questions that invited us to respond in the same way.

Here are some of the questions that were just normal for our family: "What is God doing with you? What is going on in your heart? What are some things you are growing in? What's going on in relationships right now? What do you love about life? What do you like about your skills and talents? What teachers do you like and why? What's the hardest thing about life right now?"

My parents started asking these deep questions when I was so little, I can barely remember not being asked them. They listened intently and enjoyed hearing our answers. We weren't just kids with kid answers to them. We were the most valuable humans in their eyes, and we felt it.

They also let us ask plenty of questions of our own and explore opinions that differed from theirs. They were patient with us when they disagreed and didn't get mad at us for exploring issues. My sister and I both had very strong opinions. Some people would have called us strong-willed, but my parents just thought of us as passionate.

They also didn't have a know-it-all attitude. My mom was hilarious when we were teenagers and would ask her sexual questions. A lot of times she wouldn't know the answers and would say, "When you find out, please tell me!" We actually talked about sex a lot with our parents, because they willingly pushed past the awkwardness and shared. They knew if they didn't define these things in our journey, then someone else would.

Between the ages of twelve and fourteen I went through the natural process of forming my own identity apart from my parents (individuation). However, because of our lifelong habit of sharing heart-to-heart, we stayed connected through that time. They continued to ask me deep questions and wait for me to share the things that were happening in my heart.

Creating and Maintaining Connection Is the Most Rewarding Challenge of a Parent

As someone who grew up connected to my parents, I am finding that one of my greatest joys is being present with my own daughters and creating that connection with them. From the time she turned two, my oldest daughter has often told my wife and me that her favorite times are dates with us. She loves going to the coffee shop with me or Cherie, getting hot chocolate, and connecting heart-to-heart. Most of the time it is just "cute and sweet" time, but more and more, a profound question that is defining to who she is comes up. In those moments, we are present and connected enough to be the ones who get to answer it.

My parents are some of my best friends now. People ask me who mentored me or who

my spiritual parents are, and I always tell them it is my parents. Some repeat the question multiple times because they don't believe me. Apparently, almost no one ever answers that their parents are the ones who nurtured or disciplined them. However, it is not only possible; it is the assignment God has entrusted to you. Your job is to create connection, and your kids' job will be to maintain it with you!

Remember, God dreamed of your children for millions of years before they were ever alive. He had a perfect plan of how to make them the best version of themselves and then chose you to parent them. He knew that within you would be the skill set, the nurture, and the vision to help your child connect to who they are, and to the world around them.



Shawn Bolz

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Learn more here: www.bolzministries.com

LOVING OUR ADULT CHILDREN ON PURPOSE

By DANNY SILK

In December 2009, I released the book *Loving Our Kids On Purpose*. It continues to be a bestseller for my publisher. I've done countless conferences, trainings, and counseling sessions around its content.

In the last few years, more and more people have asked, "When are you going to write a book about how to deal with our adult children?" It's a great question, and as soon as I have it figured out, I'll let you know. In the meantime, I'd like to have a heart-to-heart talk with parents of adult children.

There is a brief moment in the lives of our children—somewhere around age 6 to about 12—in which we think we know how our investment in parenting is going to turn out. We have a shining vision of how we and our children will move along together into our future, and feel comforted and confident in knowing how it's all going to go.

And then . . . it doesn't go that way at all. After doing our best to pour out our lives for them, our kids grow up and do what they want to do. Quite often, what they end up doing looks nothing like what we had planned for their lives! They make choices that disappoint us or scare us to death. Sometimes they break our hearts.

Few relationships require us to reformat our expectations of how things will work out than being the parents of adult children. Our children have always had the power to

make decisions that have tremendous impact on us. Now that they are adults, however, it seems that we have the least amount of influence over these decisions than ever before.

The pain of an adult child's bad decision is a special kind of powerless feeling and maybe the greatest challenge I've ever experienced. I've watched as my Australian son-in-law, my daughter, and my first grandchild were nearly deported for failing to file immigration paperwork on time. I've watched another child end up homeless, and listened to numerous conversations about faith and God that I never could have fathomed would be part of our relationship.

When our children make baffling choices, questions naturally arise:

“Where do I put all of this fear and pain?”

“Where is God in this chaotic swirl?”

“Is there a point where I'm supposed to let go of my child?”

I don't have all the answers to these questions, but I do know this: In the midst of the fear, pain, and confusion, we must choose to focus on the prize—the connection to our adult child's heart.

My wife, Sheri, has always said that her goal in raising our children is to get them to fall madly in love with her. We both know that getting someone to fall in love with you is not something you can *make* happen. More than ever, we are in a friendship-style relationship with our kids, which requires the choices of two powerful people. If both parties don't do the work to preserve the friendship, there isn't one. (This can be a harsh reality for parents who are still trying to maintain control over relationship with their kids in order to protect themselves.) However, whether or not our children choose to hold up their end of a friendship with us, we still get to choose to hold up our end.

Pursuing a heart-to-heart connection unceasingly and at all costs is how we express unconditional covenant love toward our children.

Covenant is a binding agreement that requires death. That sounds morbid, yes, but the deeper significance of covenant lies in the power of forming connection with people for whom we would be willing to die. Soldiers, missionaries, and emergency service workers build these bonds as they work together in life-and-death conditions every day. These men and women know that our strongest relationships are developed in times that require us to rise up in our greatest vulnerability and face our wildest fears.

As parents, we know that nothing exposes us to vulnerability and fear more than when a beloved child introduces disagreement, conflict, or poor choices into our relationship. In these moments, we have the powerful opportunity to make the sacrifices of covenant and hold on to our relationship with them. We can only strengthen covenant by practicing covenant.

I met a carpenter the other day. We shook hands and I had to hold back a yelp. The guy squeezed my hand with the force of a hydraulic press. Dang! I was not expecting that grab. Then it dawned on me that this guy picks up heavy stuff all day. His grip has developed from years of holding on to resistant objects—boards, hammers, and pneumatic tools.

In the same way, the practice of holding on to one another when our lives are under pressure or loaded with resistance (the opposite of easy) is what builds the strength of our connection. Some of our most demanding and difficult relationships translate into our strongest connections. If we will understand the benefit of these struggles, we will not as easily lose heart when they are challenging. Our sacrifice is not without reward. As Jesus said, “Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains alone. But, if it dies, it multiplies” (John 12:24).

All three of my adult children are bringing the biggest challenges I’ve ever faced into my life. Navigating issues of faith, political perspectives, and extended family

dynamics are all things I didn't anticipate when they were playing in the yard every day. But all this push and pull has built a new trust and tenacity in our relationships. Through it all, we have worked through our disconnections and strengthened our heart-to-heart connections. We are building a legacy that is saturated with inheritance.

I can honestly say that these are the greatest days of my role as a parent. My kids are teaching me to grow up and not get locked in a comfortable mindset that stops maturing. I've grown more than any Master's degree ever stretched me. This is what I call a finale! I imagine I will smell like smoke when I arrive in heaven after such a wild ride here on earth.

Oh, and did I mention the grandchildren . . .



Danny Silk

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Danny Silk serves on the Senior Leadership Team of both Bethel Church in Redding, CA and Jesus Culture in Sacramento, CA. He is the President of Loving on Purpose a ministry to families and communities worldwide. Danny is also the author of four books: *Culture of Honor*, *Loving our Kids on Purpose*, *Powerful and Free* and the top selling *Keep Your Love On*. Danny and Sheri married in 1984, and have three children and three grandchildren.

Learn more here: www.LOPLifeAcademy.com

HOW TO PARENT BY PARTICIPATION

By WM. PAUL YOUNG

I have visited South Korea only twice in my life, once shortly after *The Shack* was released in Korea and the second time after *Cross Roads*. I don't speak as an expert in anything Korean; I am only able to offer some observations from an outsider. I will say that I am personally deeply and devastatingly familiar with the power of performance orientation and 'face' (the need to protect the family from shame at any cost), that also pervades the Korean culture.

Even though the media events and interviews were largely the same on both trips, I was surprised by a significant shift taking place in the culture in only a few short years. In almost every interview on my second trip, I was asked a question that had not been raised a single time on my first trip.

"How do you heal the human soul?"

It was not being asked as an academic question, but with a sense of urgency, as if the Korean people had begun to take time for introspection and recognized that the harried commitment to progress and production had left them with hollow hearts, taking a toll on their children and community. On one significant media program, I was even asked, "Do you think our education system is killing our children?"

There is a common saying in Korea, 'If you sleep three hours a night, you may get into a top 'SKY university;' If you sleep four hours each night, you may get into another university; if you sleep five or more hours each night, especially in your last year of high school, forget about getting into any university.'

Yes, Korea is the mostly highly educated country in the world, but at what cost? Between the intensely rigorous public and private education, the hogwons, the additional tutoring and the intensive additional 'self study,' is it any wonder that children struggle with any sense of self not related to test scores and family 'face'.

We have six children; four boys and two girls. So far we have nine grandchildren, all under the age of eight. Each of our six is on a very different life path.

Our oldest, who is completing a five-year Ph.D. in Statistics, and his wife have *three* children. Recently he was asked by a friend who was seeking helpful tips and techniques in raising children. He began by saying I thought was profound. He said,

"You need to know that anything that I tell you will be 2/3 false."

Our son is pointing out something essential in this conversation, and not only about raising our children.

There is a Hebrew scripture that has been translated into the English like this: "Train up a child in the way that they should go and when they are old they will not depart from it." This is not a good translation but the wrong interpretation fit better with our Western performance/success orientation.

We thought this meant that there was a ‘way’ to train a child, the right way. If we could collectively agree on that ‘way’, our children should be molded within its definitions.

Our focus has been on the ‘way’ and not on the child.

And so it has been for the last centuries, children are purposed for production, becoming cogs in the wheels of prosperity and progress—education being the singularly most powerful tool of socialization.

The Hebrew scripture does not say anything like this. It should be translated, *“Train up a child in his or her way, the way that is their way, and when they are old they will live naturally within that way.”*

It is not that techniques are inherently bad, but as my son indicated, they (at best) apply to one of the children, but not to all three.

Every single child comes into the world and brings with them ‘their’ way.

They don’t know what that way is, but we as parents and teachers are invited into the sacred trust of helping each of them discover what that way is—a way that will be a unique expression of who they are and become as a person.

This requires another depth of thoughtfulness, of mindfulness that takes into consideration the mystery of the child herself/himself. Everything has beauty but not everyone sees it. This is certainly true when we are blinded by the need to be successful as determined by the systems that demand performance and require strict and regimented submission to its judgments and standards.

Many of the techniques and perspectives offered in a book like this will be helpful. But one will not apply to your child while another may. It is the parent who has joined with God to create a being who will change the cosmos by their presence more than by performance.

In the heart of every parent is the desire to celebrate their child and their child's way. To do so will sometimes challenge the ways and reasons things are done. May we find the courage and participate with the Holy Spirit to not only take great joy in our own children but in our neighbor's child as well.

Here is one simple technique: Rather than answer the question your child asks, ask them another question.

A question is an invitation into relationship and one good question is worth a thousand answers. Their response will be a window into the uniqueness of your child, how they think and what their emotional world looks like. "How do you think that works? Why do you think they said that? Who do you think we could ask who might know? How did that make you feel?" Questions open up the world; for you, your child and your growing relationship.



Wm. Paul Young

Author of The Shack

Paul is the author of three bestsellers, The Shack, Cross Roads & Eve. He resides outside Portland, Oregon.

Learn more here: www.wmpaulyoung.com

PARENTING SEXUALITY

By KRIS VALLOTTON

The Sexual Revolution that emerged as a counterculture movement in the 60s has become the mainstream mindset of the new millennium. What was once whispered in the dark corners of topless bars is taught in mandated public school curricula all across America! That's right, folks, if your children are in the public school system, they are likely to end up in a "Health" class teaching them that bisexual, homosexual, and transgender lifestyles are *all normal* expressions of their sexuality. They are also likely to be encouraged to experiment with their sexuality. Although the school can't give them an aspirin without your permission, they can send them to a Planned Parenthood clinic without your permission to get birth control pills! In fact, your children can have a legal abortion without your consent or even your knowledge!

"How did we get here?" you ask. That's a great question. Although there are many complex issues that have effected the erosion of morality, *the single most destructive factor at the root of the entire demise of morality is the absence of healthy sexual instruction at home.*

That's the bad news! The good news is that parents have the power to transform the nations in one generation without passing a single new law, or even closing one more abortion clinic. The strategy is simple, yet profound. If parents develop a healthy

sexual culture at home where children grow up hearing the truth about their sexuality, it will alter the landscape of morality in the nations in a single generation.

There is something inherent in the way we learn that is referred to as “the principle of first mention.” The first time we hear information on any given subject, that knowledge becomes the foundation upon which we weigh everything else we are exposed to on the same topic. For example, if you begin teaching little Johnny about healthy sexuality when he is eight years old, and at thirteen his friends try to influence him with a perverted sexual message, he will weigh their opinions against what you taught him, which he deems to be the truth, and most often reject their message as a lie. Of course, this principle works against you if his friends teach him about sex before you do! In this case, Johnny will be prone to embrace his friends’ perversion as the truth, and discard your wisdom as a lie.

God designed us with this principle because He wants parents to be the ones who lay the foundation for truth in their children. King Solomon put it best: “Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6). When parents train their children in the ways of morality, that training attracts virtuous living in them for the rest of their lives. (Of course, we all have a free will, so nothing we do guarantees perfection). It’s paramount that parents push past their fears of inadequacy and be the first to instruct their children on the important subjects of life.

Shame On You

The world perverts sex, but Christians tend to shame it, which ultimately leads to a different, but equally destructive, kind of perversion. We must come to terms with the fact that when God said, “Be fruitful and multiply,” He gave us our sex drive. Therefore, sex is good and our sex drive is normal! But what does it mean to have a sex drive? It

means that you want to have sex with someone! Our children shouldn't be shamed for being sexual beings. However, they do need to learn how to manage their sex drive nobly.

Shame is a killer. Conviction says, "I did something wrong," but shame says, "I *am* something wrong." Leading social researcher Brené Brown says that shame is the most destructive force of all time. It's the enemy of connection and belonging, and it leads to the most devastating outcomes in our lives. I have watched so many parents discipline their children with shame and wonder later why their kids struggle with low self-esteem and self-destructive behavior. Shame is a tool of the enemy. We should never, under any circumstances, embrace his ruthless instruments in raising our children.

Shame is often unknowingly seeded into the hearts of our children by the *way* we relate to sex. For example, when our children are little they are very curious about their bodies. We often play silly games with them to help them through the discovery process. They touch their nose and we say, "Nose. Say, 'N-o-s-e.'" Of course, the game continues with ears, mouth, and eyes and so on. At some point they finally get around to touching their penis or vagina, which often invokes a completely different dynamic. We often we say something like, "Don't touch that!" and follow it up by renaming their penis or vagina something silly. "Johnny! Don't play with your dinky!" This shift in attitude sends a loud message to our children that there is something shamefully wrong with parts of their body. This begins the lifelong process of forcing sex into hiding, like a wanted criminal or a terrible habit.

The Art Of Developing A Healthy Sexual Culture

God has a completely different approach to sex, which is demonstrated in Jewish weddings throughout the Bible. Jewish weddings lasted a week, and the process of the marriage ceremony was quite revealing. The wedding began in much the same way as

our celebrations do today. The bride and groom exchanged vows while the families looked on. But then something powerful happened. There was a bridal chamber (most often a tent) erected in the midst of the festival, and after the ceremonial vows, the couple entered the chamber to consummate their covenant. The newlyweds had sex for the first time while the families waited outside. Then the groom took the sheets from the bed and hung them over the chamber wall for all the guests to see, thus displaying the blood from his bride's broken hymen. It was only after this that the celebration began.

Jewish weddings were a family affair attended by every age group. You can imagine what the conversation was like when three-year-old Johnny saw the bloody sheet for the first time. The sheet actually became a talking point for Johnny's parents to teach him (age appropriately) about sexuality. They didn't need the sweaty palm "sex talks" at fifteen, because the Jews had a healthy sexual culture, where sex was integrated naturally and organically into their daily lives.

If you are a parent, I want to encourage you to develop a healthy sexual culture in your home where sex is celebrated as a beautiful gift from God to be shared with the man or woman of your dreams in marriage. Your children need to know the reason they have a sex drive long before God wants them to have sex, and understand that the value of their virginity is in the blood, sweat, and tears it takes to get their virginity from the battlefield all the way to the honeymoon suite, so that on the night they lay with their lover, they have something to give that they had to fight to keep. Anyone can give away something expensive, but only those who understand sacrifice can give away something valuable!

There are a lot of great resources available to help you prepare to teach your kids about

sex. Our organization Moral Revolution has several books and workbooks that will make it easy for you to approach this subject—check out www.moralrevolution.com.

We tend to fear what we don't understand, so study this subject until you feel comfortable and confident that you can teach your children about sexuality without feeling embarrassed or ashamed. May God richly bless your efforts and may we together incite a moral revolution!



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BECOMING A FAMILY OF WORLD CHANGERS

By DR. KIRK ELLIOTT

There is a war happening in the spiritual world, and it is manifesting in today's politics, economy, natural disasters, terrorism, sickness and disease and more. I bet you can feel it. We have an entire culture of overreach and abuse by the government—executive orders and legislation are stripping us of our freedoms. Threats of terrorist attacks on our nation don't compare to the threat of our being destroyed from within. The moral decay in our nation has caused the conspicuous consumption that has made us slaves to our creditors, and created culture of death all around us. People are sick and dying because of financial stress, because of the food they eat, and because they are living life in a way that pleases man and not God. Politically, geopolitically, economically, morally, socially, and spiritually we have come unglued.

This decay has desensitized us as a nation to the point of calling evil things good and good things evil. I bet you can come up with dozens of examples where this is the case. But truth is not relative—truth is absolute! In our politically correct, godless, morally relative society, speaking truth has not only been frowned upon, but made illegal in many circumstances.

The great news is that we know how to win a spiritual battle. We pray and fast. But we also raise our voices and take a stand for truth. In doing this, we must remember our

Source. For God did not give us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of love and a sound mind (see 2 Timothy 1:7). Perfect love casts out all fear (see 1 John 4:18).

The Courage to Speak

The life of Queen Esther is one of the greatest stories of courage in the Bible. If you remember, Esther, a Jewish orphan living in exile in Persia, was raised by her cousin, Mordecai. Through a series of events, King Xerxes chose Esther to be his queen. Then Haman, the king's right-hand man, tricked the king into signing a law that would sentence all Jews to death. Mordecai sent a message to Esther urging her to go before the king and ask for mercy for her people:

“If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14)

The law stated that anyone who came into Xerxes' presence without being asked could be killed—even Esther! But she conquered her fear, put her life on the line, entered the king's chamber, and made her request to the king to have the horrible law changed.

When Esther came before with the king, she knew she was facing two possible outcomes. Either she would find favor with the king and her request be granted, or she would be killed for even making such a request. The consequences were severe, but the act of one brave woman saved the lives of an entire nation.

As families, we need to be talking about areas where we can rise up like Esther, be courageous, defend the defenseless, and stand up for truth. The world needs heroes.

Will you be one of them? Will your kids be? This generation and future generations will be impacted by what we do now. Now is the time to let our light shine! You were born for such a time as this.

Martin Luther King, Jr. did this in his fight for human rights. Patrick Henry took a stand when he rallied the masses to fight for freedom during the Revolutionary War and boldly declared, "Give me liberty or give me death." Harriet Tubman put her life on the line to lead enslaved people to freedom along the underground railroad. Oskar Schindler, a German industrialist, put his family fortune on the line and was credited with saving over 1,200 Jews during the Holocaust.

Like these heroes, and like Esther, we need to speak out, make our voices heard, and change the course of history so future generations will still have a country to call home. We may not be popular. We may even be putting our security and comfort levels at risk. But consider the flip side. What if we don't act? What if we don't follow the simple gospel of Jesus and the command to "love your neighbor"? What if we don't share the good news and let our light shine in this dark world? Then we have a silent world that is ravaged by fear because the only ones speaking are spreading a crippling anti-gospel of despair, destruction, fear and death.

The Cost of Silence

I recently read a book by Andy Andrews called *How Do You Kill 11 Million People?* Quite possibly it was one of the most important books I've ever read. In this book, a horrific description of life during the Holocaust was recounted from testimony during the Nuremberg trials. During this testimony, a story unfolded about a church on the railroad tracks in Germany during the reign of Hitler. The people of this church heard stories of the Jews and how they were being exterminated, but chose not to believe them because it was just too unbelievable. Then, one Sunday morning as they were in

church worshipping, they heard the train coming. This time, they heard people screaming—Jews screaming on the way to their deaths. What did the church do? They started to sing their hymns louder so they could drown out the cries and the screams of the people being taken to their death.

Is it wrong to be in church? No, of course not.

Is it wrong to worship God and worship Him loudly? Of course it isn't.

Is it wrong to be in church and to worship God so loudly just to drown out the screams of people being brought to their death? *Yes!*

This is where there is a problem. What could that church have done differently? I don't know, but anything would have been better than nothing. They chose to protect their comfort rather than respond to the pain of those being exterminated. This is wrong.

Sometimes it hurts to do the right thing. In fact, it's generally easy to do the wrong thing, because it feels good. Imagine how different our world would be if we would rise up and be heroes in other people's lives. Speak out for those who cannot defend themselves. Love your neighbor as yourself, and at a minimum—just be friendly!

We have a chance to be world changers and history makers—and to raise them. Here's a simple assignment to do with your family. Think of the people you know who you feel like you could defend. Are there friends, family members, or even entire groups of disadvantaged people that need help? Write them down. Then, think about what you could do. These dinner-table conversations could be deep, thought-provoking, and ultimately action-provoking.

Here is a challenge: *You might be the only Jesus your neighbor ever sees.* Maybe you are living in your house for this reason. Reach out to their neighbor. Ask if you can pray

for them. I bet they are hurting. I bet they have something that is troubling them. As followers of Jesus, we have the answer! We have hope. We have a peace that surpasses all understanding, an unquenchable fire burning inside us, and a light radiating from us that can cast out the darkness.t



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Dr. Kirk Elliott is the CEO of J2911 Holdings, a private equity holding company & an economist and wealth manager with the McAlvany Financial Group, a wealth management firm. He serves on the boards of Patrick Henry College, the True Freedom Foundation, Dr. James Dobson’s Family Talk and Council for National Policy Action, Inc. He is married to JoLayne and has two kids, Riley and Caden.

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