

# Parenting 0 to 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

South Lake Church, February 29, 2020

Barry & Debbie Mattox

# There are no perfect parents!!




**And families are always messy.**



Even with glaring parenting errors,  
God still raised up men and women to make a difference.

There has only been one perfect parent: God himself.  
We get a picture of God, the loving father, in the Parable of the Prodigal Son.

God is always refining His People.  
We have God's Word, God's Church, God's Spirit, and God Himself to help us.



**I just want  
them to be  
happy**

# Have the Right Goals

**“Maximize happiness” is not the right goal !**

The overall goal is love.

- Love God ... love your neighbor. *Matthew 22:37-40*
- The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. *1 Timothy 1:5*

We start out self-centered and needy, and through others loving and training us first, our character is developed so that we learn to love.

**“Maximize happiness” is not the right goal !**

**... He also predestined to be conformed to  
the image of his Son ... Romans 8:29**

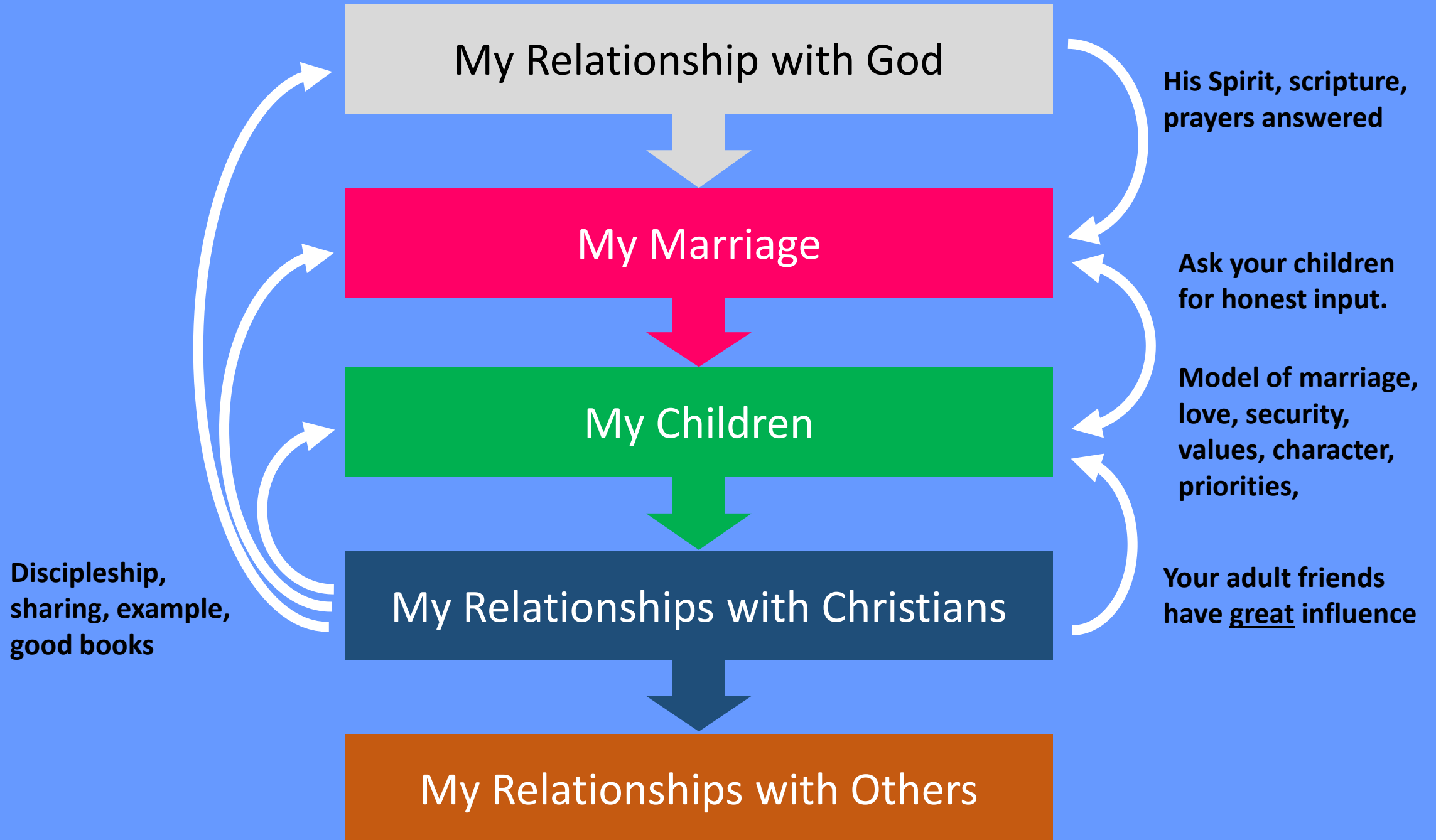


**Our goal is for our children to fall in love with God and  
to strive to be like Jesus. But how do we do this?**

# Lay a Sturdy Foundation from Birth through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

1. Work on your own relationship with God
2. Work on your marriage (and accepting your situation)
3. Parents have good supportive friendships
4. Nurture a strong relationship with your children
5. Teach obedience (self-control, respect, cooperation)
6. Teach them to identify and embrace truth
7. Model everything you are training in your children!







# Instead of Compensating, Be Unified on the Right Principles

Reckless ← Responsible → Over-Protective

Harsh, Rigid ← Respectful, Firm → Sentimental Softy

Uninvolved ← Appropriate Relationship → Overly Attentive

Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so? Amos 3:3

# God Has Wired Us to Connect

- Parents experience instant, strong attachment to a child at birth, with unconditional love.
- Babies attach to their parents out of need for food, protection, and emotional connection.
- For thousands of years, children have learned the basics through this strong attachment all the way to maturity.



# Parental Attachment



- Parents are committed
- Children need and crave the attachment
- Provides children with unconditional love, protection, acceptance, security, provision
- Attachment gives parents a powerful ability to teach and mature their children

Parental Attachment provides the environment for character and spiritual growth.

Luke 2:51-52 Then Jesus returned to Nazareth with his parents and was obedient to them. . . . And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

# Parental Attachment Provides Maturity

Children learn, almost automatically:

- Language
- Hygiene
- Manners, social cues
- Respect for others
- Obedience to authority
- What a marriage looks like
- What dependence on God looks like
- Life skills

The first objective is to connect with your children.  
If you fail to connect, you cannot teach or correct effectively.

# Satan's Plan to Distract Us

Can't pay the bills  
The boss is irritated  
Wife is irritated  
No time with God  
Need a vacation!



I'm tired  
House is a mess  
Kids are out of control!  
When's the last time  
we went on a date?





# Distracted Parents



When asked what invention they would choose to not have, the response given most often by children was “Cell Phones.”

# Peer Attachment



- Children crave attachment
- Occurs when Parent Attachment is not strong enough
- Peers are not equipped to give unconditional love, acceptance, security, intimacy
- Child takes cues for dress, language, social practices, morals, and values from peers
- Results: insecure, emotionally flat, short-term rather than long-term goals

Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.” - 1 Corinthians 15:33



## Peer Attachment Feels Good at First

- They're having fun
- Maybe they will be more well rounded
- They are forming friendships
- They're learning how to get along with other kids
- It will help their socialization
- **Gives the parent a break !**

# Parental Attachment Meets Needs

**The parent-child attachment meets his needs for security, acceptance, protection, support, instruction, and love.**



# The Problem of Peer Attachment

**If parent-child attachment is damaged or neglected, the child seeks to meet his needs for security, acceptance, and love by attaching to his peers as an alternative to (not in addition to) his parental attachment.**

~~Y  
'Par  
)  
chi~~

Child's Peers



Child

Teasing, bullying, put-downs  
Pressure to conform  
Insecurity (hoping for acceptance)  
Short-term goals  
Reckless behavior  
The culture of the world  
Parents are "un-cool"

# What Does Peer Attachment Look Like?



- **Disconnects from parents (and extensions)**
- Bored when not with peers. Emotionally “flat”
- Not interested in family activities
- Video games, texting, TV consume time at home
- School is not for learning, but to be with peers
- Hard to have a conversation with him
- Minimal interaction with parents, aloof
- Irritable, discontent, disrespectful (rolls his eyes)
- May be overtly defiant to parents
- Very difficult to get him to be responsible, do homework, etc.
- Peers define how he dresses, what he listens to, what’s cool, what grades are OK, his moral standards



# The Solution: Build an Enduring Attachment

- Parents are equipped, peers are not!
- Your attachment is your main tool:
  - to teach
  - to correct
  - to pass on faith and values
- Decide it's worth whatever it takes
- Be intentional

# Strengthen the Connection

- Intimacy: sharing deep feelings, being emotionally vulnerable  
Note: Peer relationships (not vulnerable) cannot compete
- Provide structure for intimacy: something you do regularly, like taking walks, walking the dog, nighttime rituals
- Teach your kids about sex, starting early (use the books)
- Talk about everything, especially what kids are interested in
- Have meals together
- Take family vacations
- Create family traditions
- Family devotionals (simple, short)
- Expand the Parent-Child Attachment to your friends and your child's teachers
- Talk about your relationship
- Keep the emotional tank full

# Sharing Your Faith Builds the Relationship

- The empty photo album
- Tell them Bible stories and Bible characters
- Talk about God: creator, powerful, loving, cares about you
- Prayer: regularly talk to God
- The anchor

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. - Hebrews 6:19



# Extend Your Parental Attachment



+



+

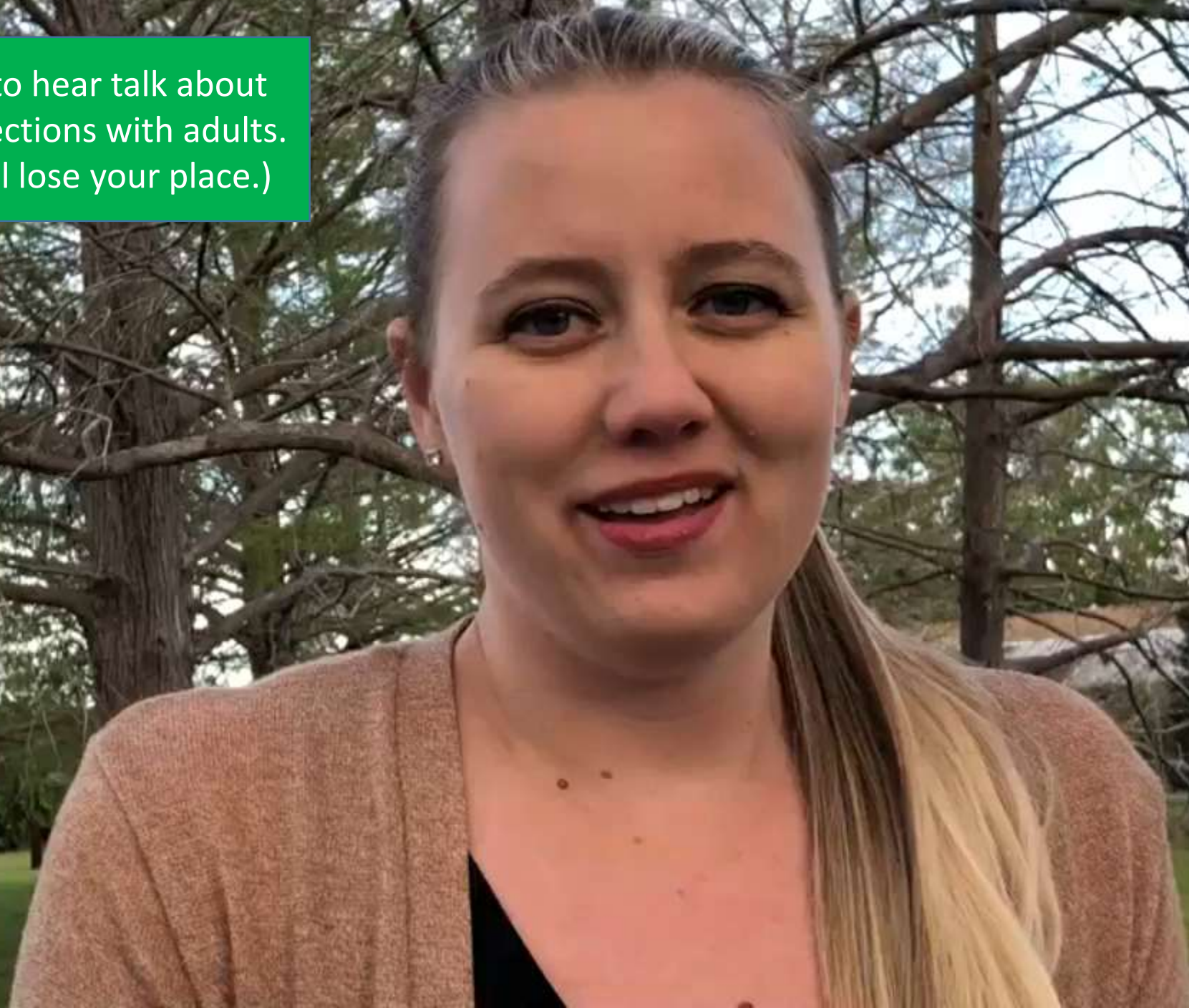


**Interaction with an adult can have a greater impact on a child than church activities.**



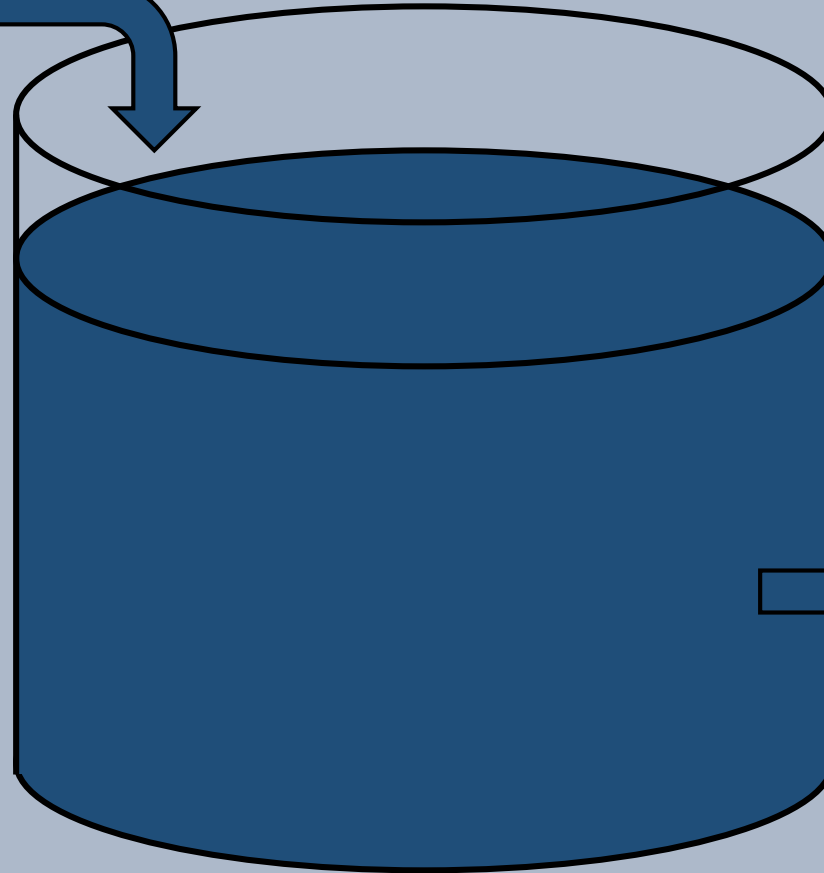


CONTROL-Click here to hear talk about encouraging the connections with adults. (If you just Click, you'll lose your place.)



# Monitor the Emotional Tank and Keep It Filled

- Loving Eye Contact
- Physical Affection
- Focused Attention



**Disappointments  
teasing, bullying  
harshness, etc.**

# The Emotional Tank



- Whiney
- Hard to please
- Disobedient
- Unmotivated
- Depressed
- Angry
- Uncooperative
- Disrespectful



- Secure
- Cooperative
- Able to work through disappointments
- Generally content
- Respectful of others
- More able to think about others needs

# God's One Command for Children

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.  
“Honor your father and mother” — which is the first  
commandment with a promise — “so that it may go well  
with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

*Ephesians 6:1-3*

Obedience Motivated by Trust and Relationship Is  
the Foundation for Raising Children.

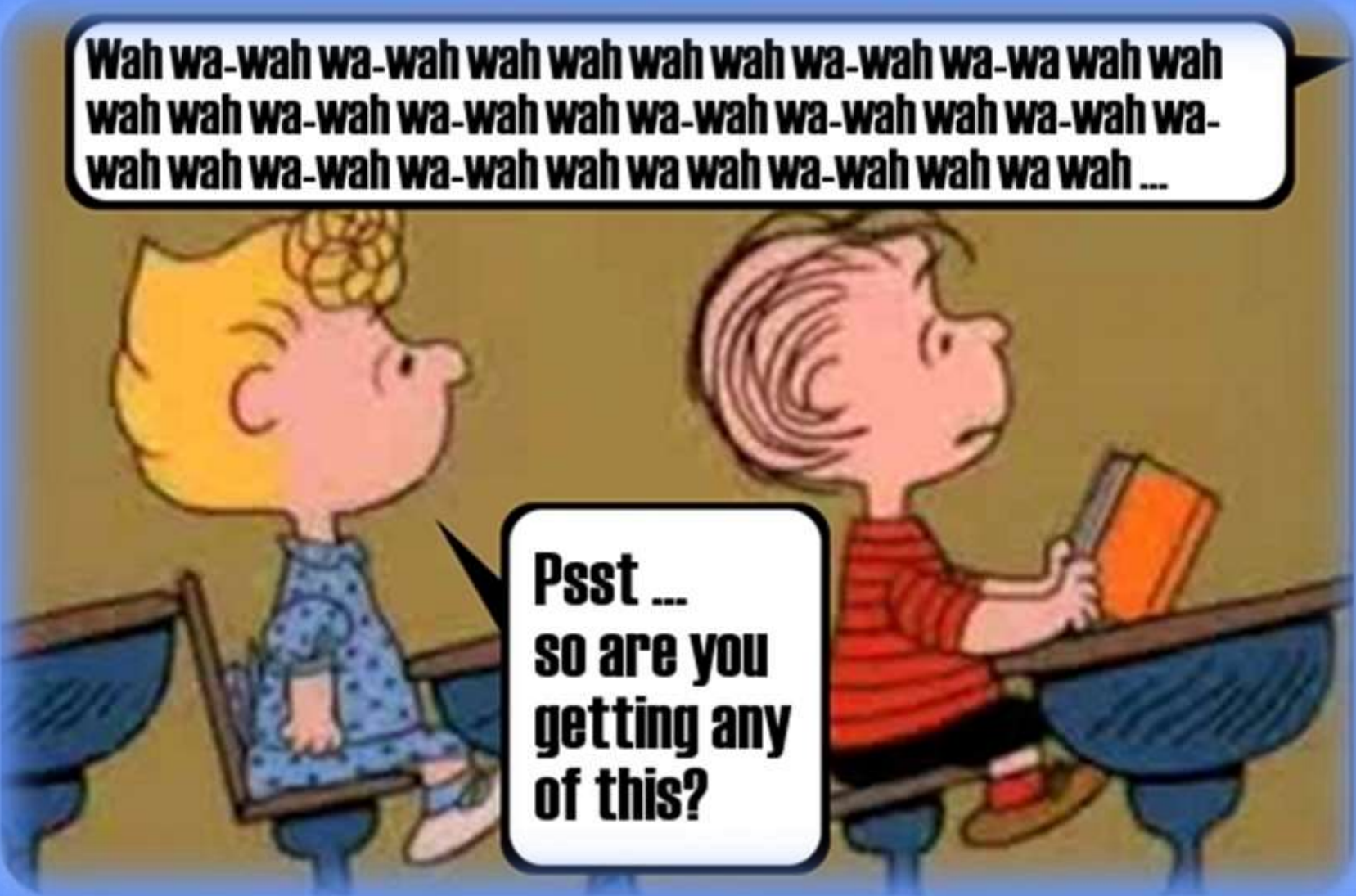


# Avoid These Parental Traps :

- Giving warnings, counting to 3, etc.
  - Instead, get their attention the first time and expect obedience
- Bribing your child
  - “If you’ll be really good, we’ll get ice cream afterwards”
  - Growing in the character of obedience should be the reward in itself
- Giving in to your child because you want your child to like you
  - You are the parent. The child needs love and security, not someone he can manipulate.
- Talking too much
  - Kids want to know what you’re going to do, not what you’re going to say



# Perhaps Parents' Biggest Mistake in Raising Young Children



# Spanking Done Right

- Done in private
- Never in anger. Take time to pray and cool down if you need to.
- Discipline for specific types of offenses (e.g., lying, disobedience, intentional meanness, never for a true accident)
- Be very clear and make sure your child understands
- Punishment should have nothing to do with your embarrassment or personal loss or inconvenience.
- Express that discipline is out of love. Parents are disciplined too. (It just takes a different form.)
- Instead of “you were bad,” let him/her know “You are better than that.”
- Reconcile with hugs and smiles
- Probably use other means of training after a certain age (5 or 6?)

# Time-Out Done Right

- Time-out may be called for when direction is given and the child does not obey in a timely fashion (or not at all). The usual reasons that a child doesn't obey the first time is
  - (1) He wants to demonstrate that he has the power do his own will or
  - (2) He doesn't want to stop doing whatever he's doing
- Make sure you have your child's full attention, or you can't really expect obedience the first time you ask. At most, you may decide to remind him, "Remember, I only remind you once if I've asked you to do something."
- Don't threaten. If he has not responded after a few seconds, calmly lead him to time out. You control the time, not a clock or timer. As soon as you decide that time-out is over, he is to immediately do what you've asked him to do.
- Other reasons to give time-out is that the child is being aggressive or otherwise is acting inappropriately with others (fighting, disrespectful, not cooperating).

# Descriptive Praise

As our children hear us complimenting their good qualities, they want to take on those qualities more and more.

Ephesians 6:4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Hebrews 3:13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.

# How to get started using Descriptive Praise

1. Choose two annoying behaviors you'd like your child to improve, and write them down.
2. For each behavior, notice and Descriptively Praise every time your child does it right or just OK or even just a bit better than before.
3. Notice and mention when your child isn't doing the annoying behavior.
4. Avoid superlatives!
5. Make a goal of Descriptively Praising some aspect of the improved behavior at least ten times a day.

# Teach Them Discern Truth

- Give them reasons and evidence for the truth of the Bible
- Ideas (and people) are almost never all bad or all good
- Teach “critical thinking” to separate truth from falsehood or half-truth
- Encourage them to challenge the hijacking of common words
- Teach them to discern the belief being portrayed by songs, books, TV programs, common practices and statements
- Give them evidence of the truth of the Bible and Bible principles
- Apply truth to examine moral issues, sexual practices, and pornography

# Greatest Commandment

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. (Matt 22:37 also Mark 12:30 and Luke 10:27)

Loving God with all your mind means being able to give reasons and evidence for what you believe.

Always be prepared to give an answer to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect . . . 1 Pet 3:15

Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. Ephesians 5:11



# We Must Teach Truth and Expose Lies about Sex

## God's Truth

- God's created sex as a bond to create one flesh out of two
- The gift of sex is wonderful and should be protected
- Obeying God's instructions for purity prevents damage to his plan for sex, marriage, and family
- This bond is powerful and helps
  - to keep the marriage strong
  - to respect one another's differences
  - to be considerate of each other
  - to resolve conflicts
- God's plan provides for a stable family, with support for all

## World's (Satan's) Lies

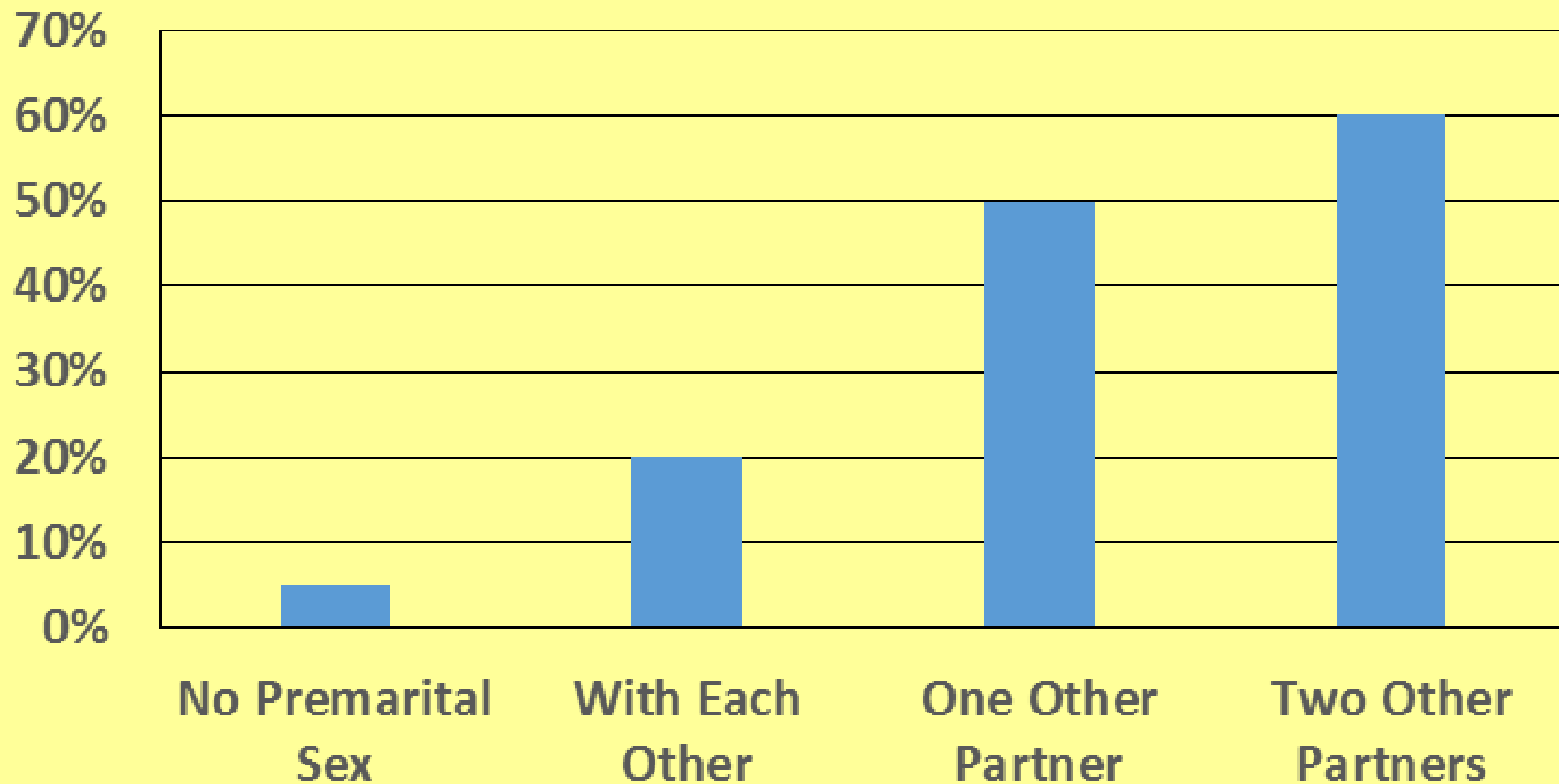
- Sex is harmless and can be used
  - to get someone to like you
  - to prove manhood/womanhood
  - to show off (bragging rights)
  - to be accepted by the crowd
  - to prove your sexual prowess
  - to relieve your sexual tension
  - just to have some fun or excitement
- Teenagers are able to decide when they are ready for sex
- Safe sex with multiple people is healthy and enriches your life

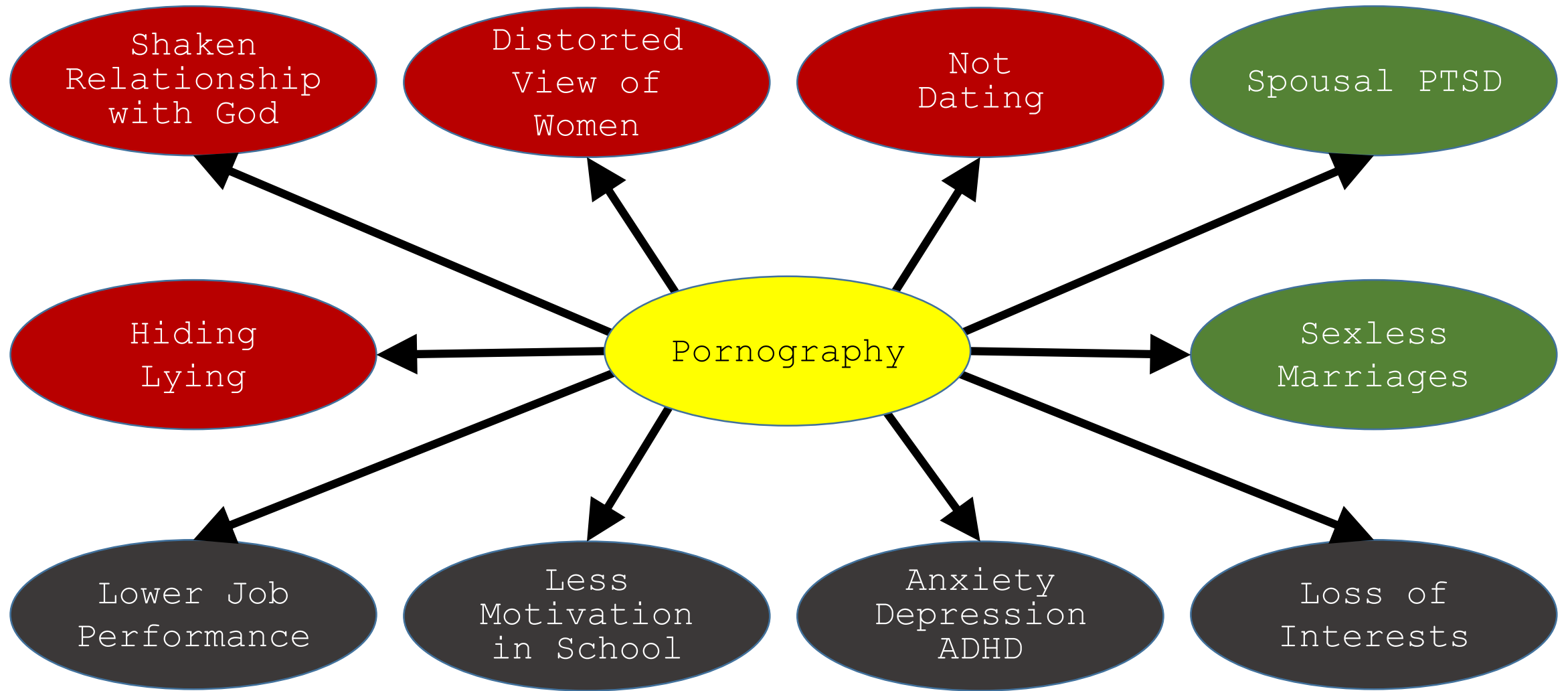
If you are not teaching your kids God's plan for sex, Satan will give them a plan designed to destroy them.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10:10

If you neglect teaching your kids about sex, you leave them insecure, unprepared and vulnerable.

## *Divorce Rate*





**Pornography is now the #1 reason marriages end in divorce in America.**

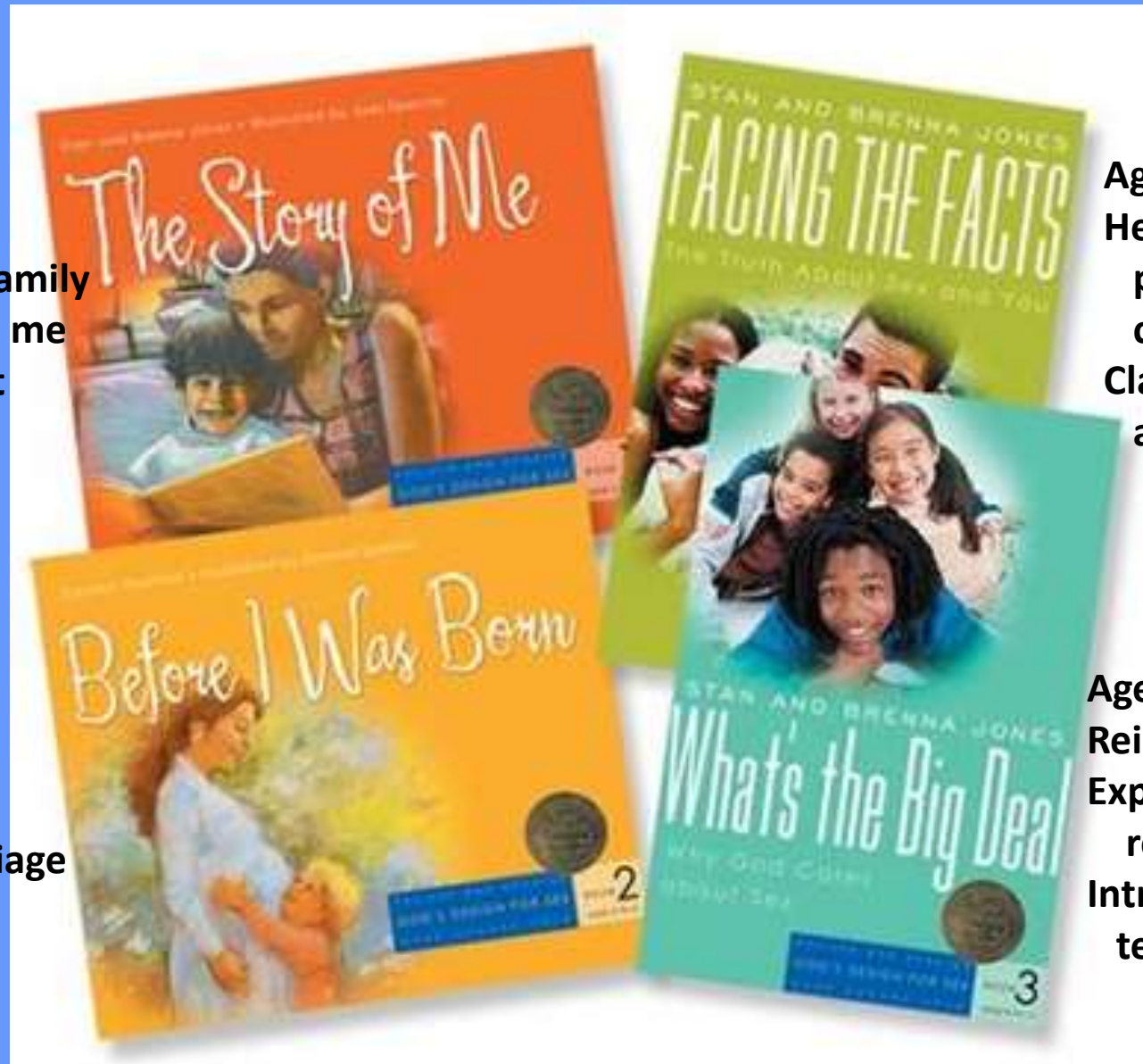
# So What Do We Do about It?

- Know what's at stake
- God says to continually train your kids
- Importance of talking early
- Books that make it easy
- Regularly talk; not just “the” talk
- Building a spiritual family is essential
- Grace and truth in your parenting
- Your kids need a plan



**Ages 3-5:**  
God's wonderful plan for family  
The amazing body He gave me  
Boys and girls are different

**Ages 5-8:**  
Differences in your bodies  
God's plan for marriage  
Sexual intercourse in marriage



**Ages 11-14:**  
Helping your child through  
physical and emotional  
challenges of puberty  
Clarifying distortions of sex  
and the beauty of God's plan

**Ages 8-11:**  
Reinforce God's plan for sex  
Expose worldly ideas and the  
resulting destruction  
Introduce STDs and unplanned  
teenage pregnancy

**The most powerful educational tool on the planet is not  
a book,  
speech,  
video,  
seminar,  
or an on-line training module.**

**IT'S MODELING: Providing an observable pattern of  
behavior and doing it consistently.**



You are the most influential model for your children. They see everything.







**I want you to be like me:**

**Talk the way I talk.**

**Drive the way I drive.**

**Eat and drink the way I eat and drink.**

**Watch the kinds of shows I watch.**

**Handle your money like I handle my money.**

**Balance work & life like I balance work & life.**

**Handle your anger like I handle my anger.**

**Repent the way that I repent.**

**Love God and others the way I love.**



**Follow my example  
as I follow the example of Christ.**

**1 Corinthians 11:1**

# Parents' Homework

Be prepared to describe . . .

1. One attitude or behavior that you are uncomfortable passing down to your children.
2. Your plan to change it.