

# Dads' Discussions

Orlando Middle School Dads, 5/24/2020

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# There are no perfect parents!!

## *Parents*

- Adam & Eve
- Abraham & Sarah & Hagar
- Isaac & Rebecca
- Jacob & Leah & Rachel
- Eli
- Samuel
- David
- Joseph & Mary

## *Children*

- Cain kills his brother Able
- Sends one son off into wilderness
- Favoritism, deceit, hatred
- Favoritism, brothers sold Joseph
- Evil, fornicators, thieves, defiled
- Sons were corrupt
- Rape, murder, treason
- Lost Jesus for 3 days

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.

**You are not going to be a perfect parent, so get over it.**

**Stop pretending that you are. Ask God for help! Ask others for help!**

**Form a “community” of dads who help one another!**

**Listen to advice, including listening to your wives.**

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

Ephesians 6:4

I'm sure you have already noticed there are differences between middle-school children and younger (elementary-age) children:

- They are thinking more and are forming opinions.
- They are beginning to find their identity.
- Their friends have a greater influence on their thinking.
- They are curious about and perhaps interested in sex.
- They hate hypocrisy.
- They need to have healthy ways of dealing with anger and disappointment.

# 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.

# The Blessings of Parental Attachment

**The parent-child attachment provides an environment for meeting a child's needs for security, acceptance, and love because of the unconditional love parents have for their children.**

You (Parent)



Child

**Unconditional love**  
**Acceptance, physical affection**  
**Security and comfort**  
**Food, Clothing, Shelter**  
**Competent instruction and wisdom**  
**Spiritual foundations**



# The Problems 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 (Parent)~~  
~~Child~~

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



This afternoon, let's have a discussion about topics that really affect your connection:

1. They must know you like and respect them
2. Make time for connection
3. Be a safe place to talk
4. Model vulnerability, humility, repentance

Let's Discuss . . .

How can we let our kids know we really like and respect them?

## **Kids need to know you really like them and respect them.**

Q: How do you show your kids that they are your treasure, that you delight in them, and that you like being with them?

Q: Kids (especially sons) need to know that you are proud of them. Give examples of how you can express pride in your kids. What ways can you think of to express pride? Are there things that we should avoid doing or saying?

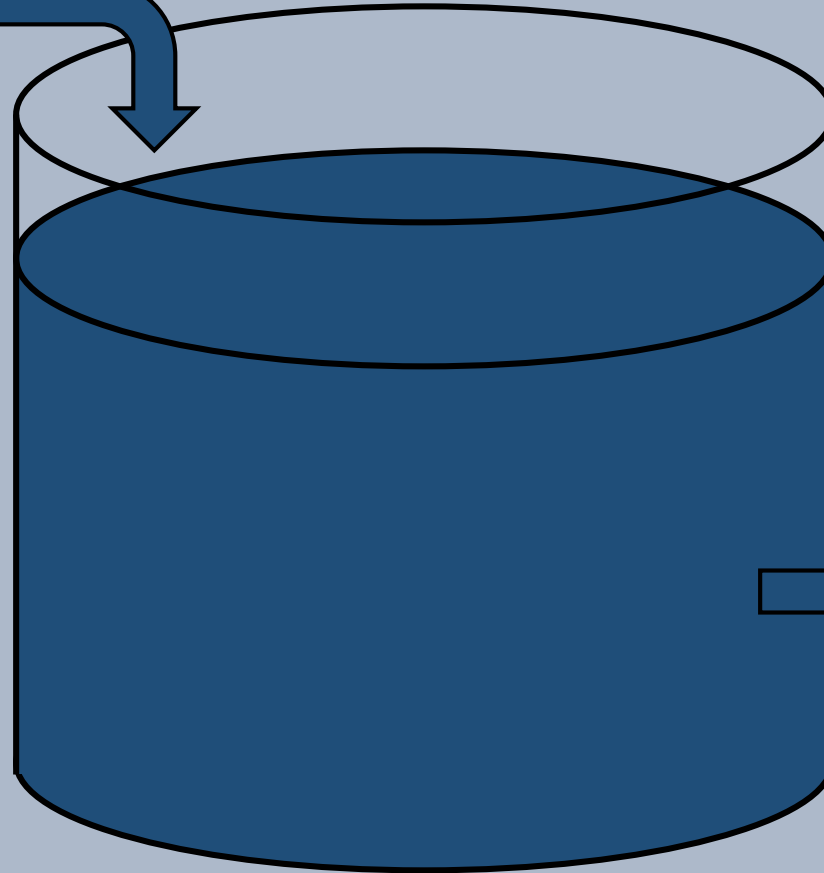
Q: Girls need to know that you think they are beautiful and attractive. What are healthy ways to express that you see her as a beautiful and attractive young lady? What qualities do you want to emphasize that make a woman beautiful and attractive?

Q: Can you think of Bible verses that talk about a woman's beauty?

Q: Let's give other examples of how we can express that we not only love them, but that we LIKE them and enjoy being with them and doing things with them.

# 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

**We've got to make time for a connection.**

**Love = quality time**



# 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



If you don't control it, technology can keep us from connecting.

Let's Discuss . . .

How to make time for connection

**We've got to make time for a connection. Love = quality time**

Q: What is quality time for a middle-schooler?

Q: What are some activities that are not quality time?

Q: When do you find time that you can focus on being with your kids?

Q: Does it make sense to "schedule" times? Put them on your calendar?

Q: What does your kid consider a good time with his dad?

**Be a safe place to talk.**

Let's Discuss . . .

How can we make talking with us safe?

# **We've got to be a safe place for them to talk about what's important to them and what they are experiencing.**

Q: How do we make it safe? What mistakes to avoid? What does safe mean?

Q: What should you talk about? Should you ask questions?

Q: How do you avoid making your conversation sound like an interrogation?

Q: What types of things shut down a conversation?

Q: What can you do to have meaningful conversations?

Q: What are the things that this age is most interested in?

Q: Are there topics that we should avoid?

Q: Can you think of ways to get them to agree to balance technology, friends time, family time, spiritual time, etc.?

**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**

Let's Discuss . . .

Being a model of vulnerability,  
humility, and repentance

## **Be a model of vulnerability, humility, and repentance.**

Q: Is it good to show your weaknesses to your kids?

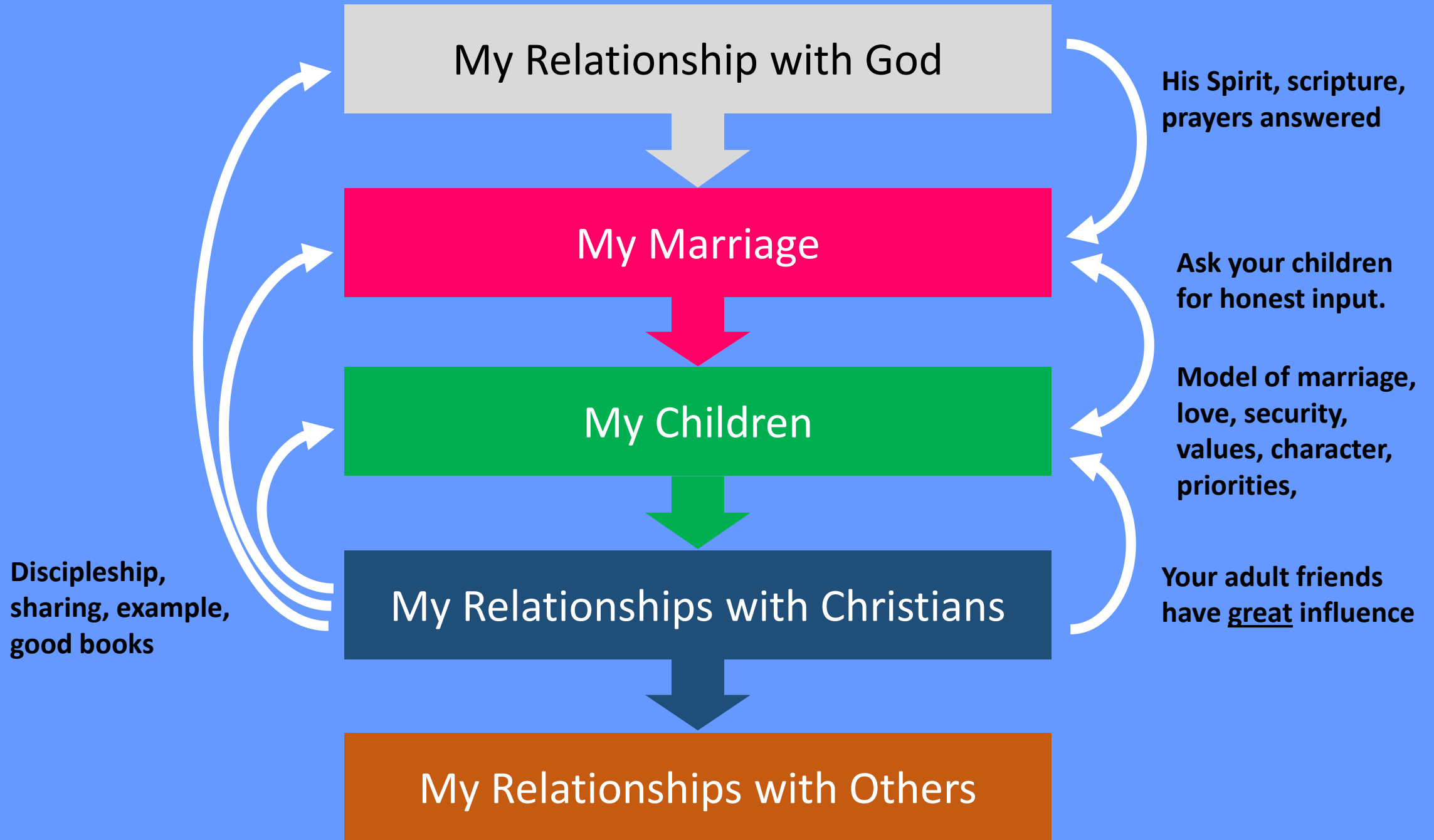
Q: Should you open yourself up to correction by your kids, or is that letting them be disrespectful?

Q: What does it mean to be beyond reproach?

Q: How do you model repentance for your kids?

Q: Give examples of your modeling vulnerability. Repentance. Humility.





# Lay a Sturdy Foundation

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. Reinforce character (self-control, respect, cooperation)
6. Teach them to identify and embrace truth
7. Model everything you are training in your children!

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





# 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

# 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

# Evidence-Based Truth

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

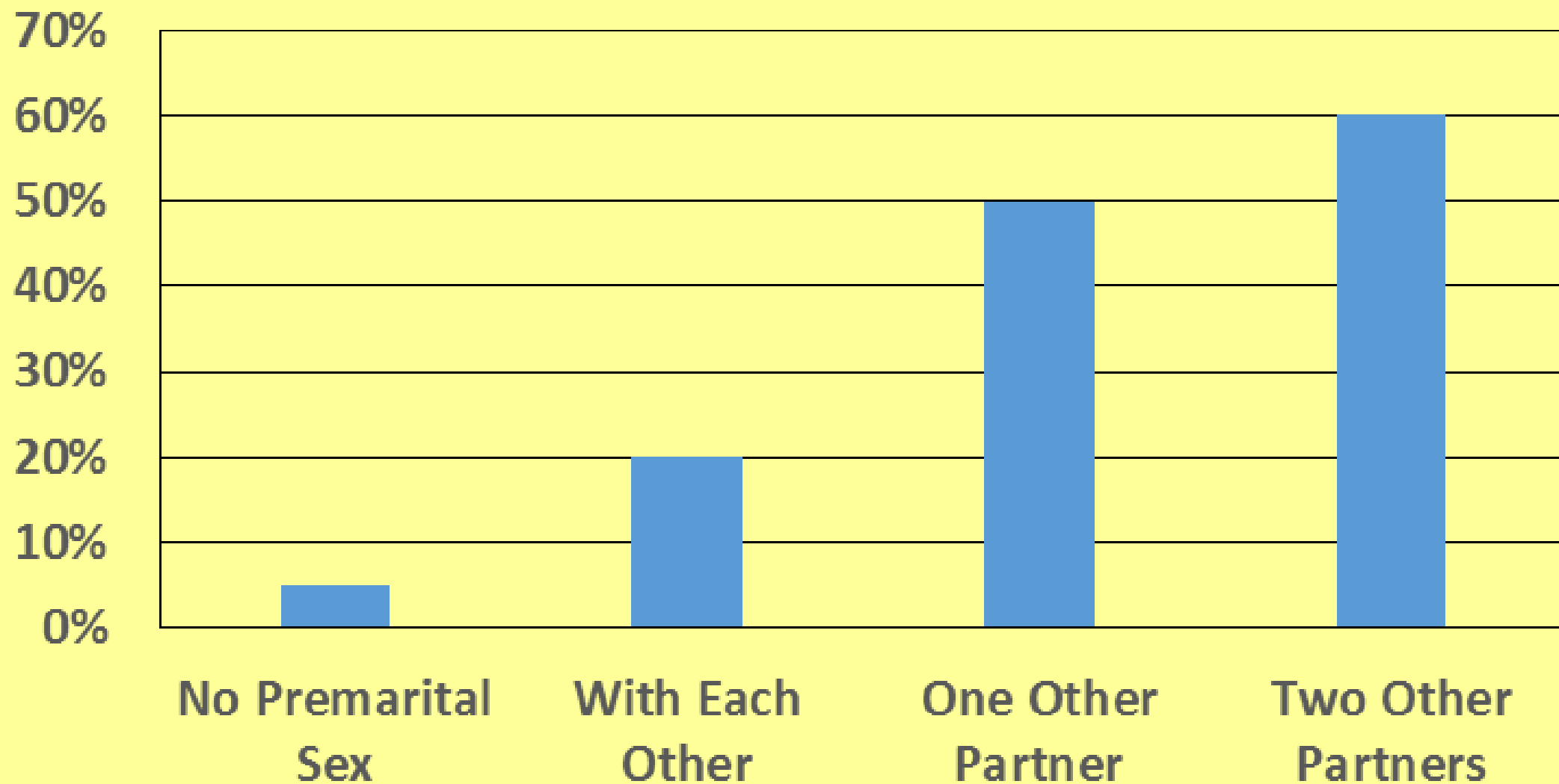


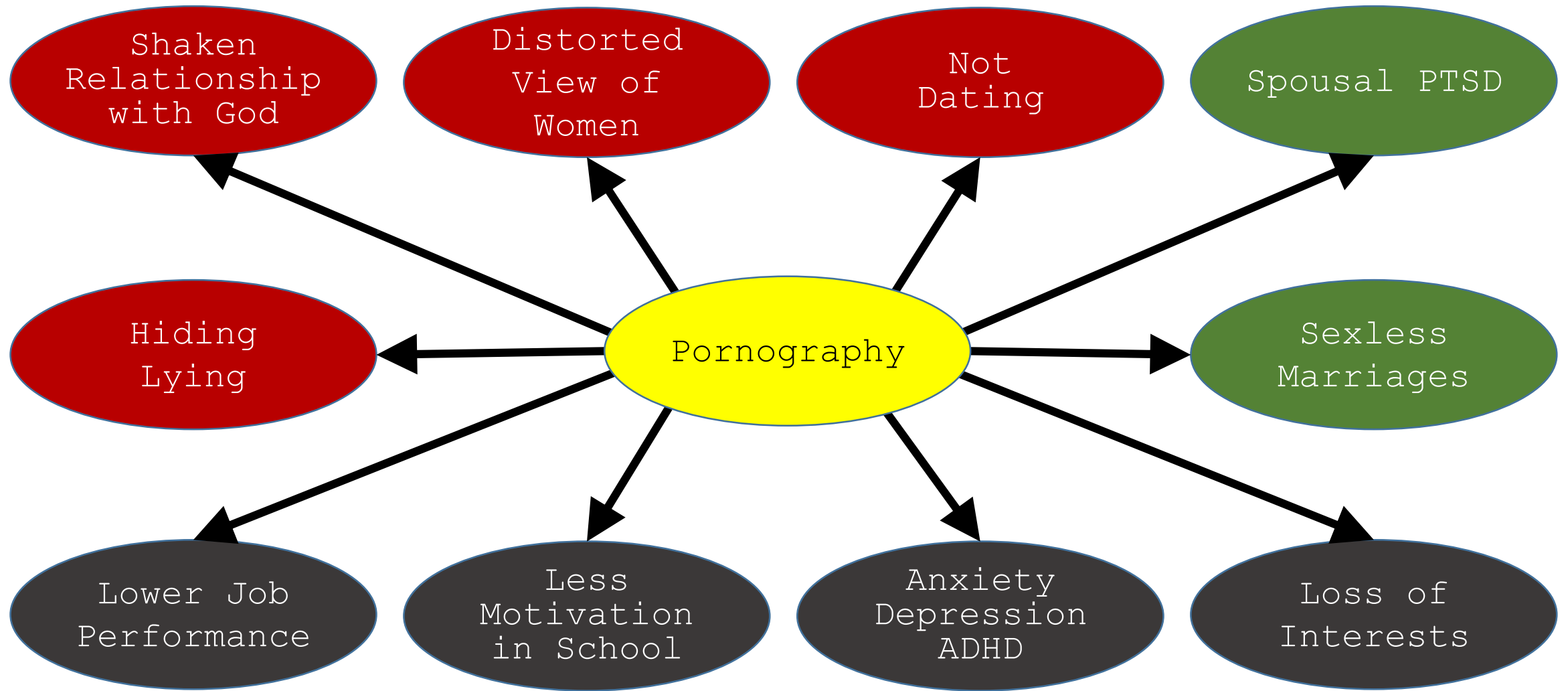
If you are not teaching your kids God's plan for sex, Satan will give them a plan designed to destroy them.

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*





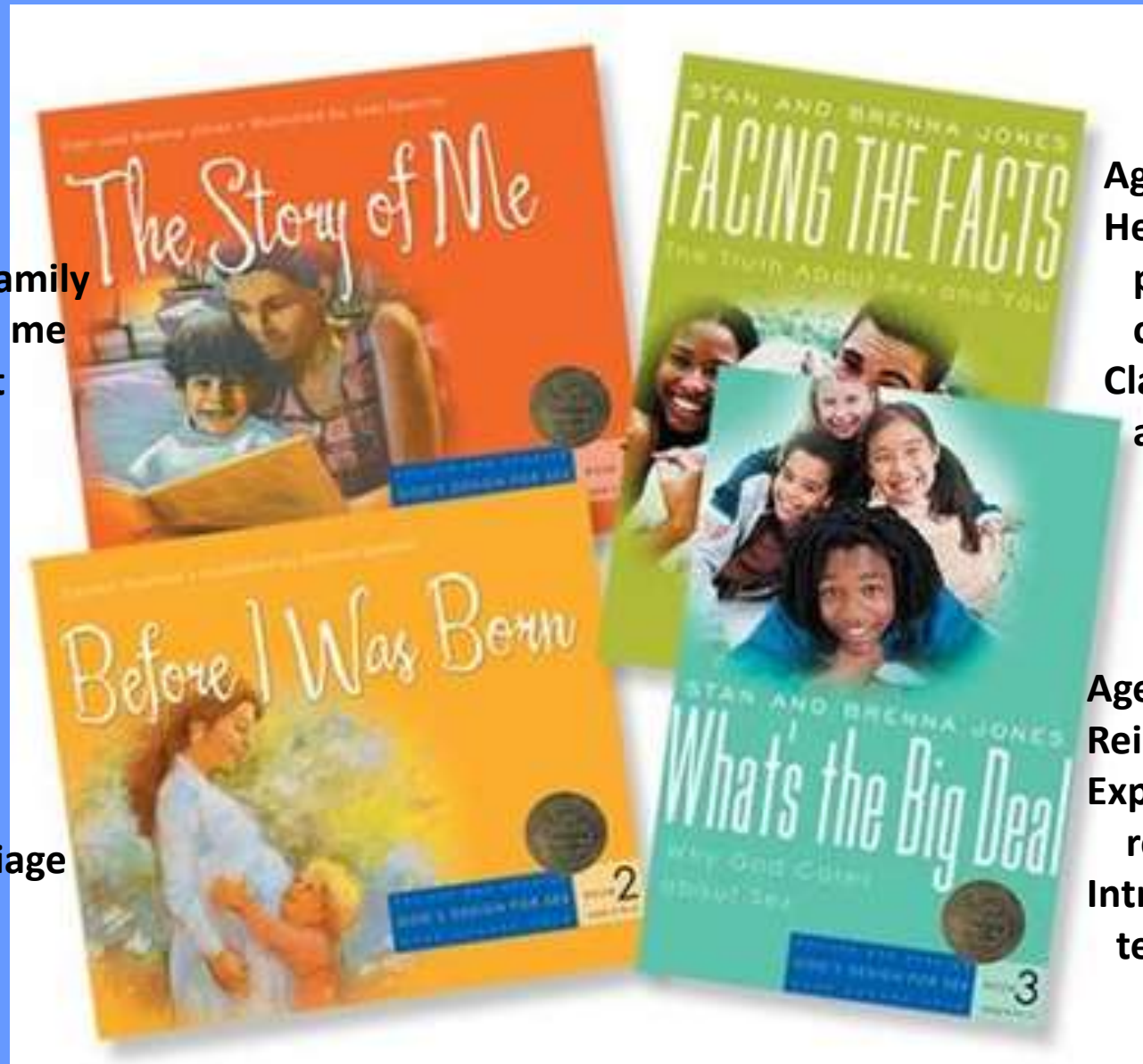
**Pornography is now the #1 reason marriages end in divorce in America.**

# 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

# 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 on really good behavior, 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 Children





# Discipline

- Never in anger. Take time to pray and cool down if you need to.
- Be very clear and make sure your child understands the character that needs to be developed
- Discipline should have nothing to do with your embarrassment or personal loss or inconvenience.
- Express that discipline is out of love. Share ways that God has disciplined you.
- Instead of “you were bad,” let him/her know “You are better than that.”
- You may ask, “What do you think your consequence should be?”
- Reassure them of your love for them.

# Possible Consequences

- Loss of privileges
- Extra chores
- Do not use loss of church activities
- Be careful about the time frame. (What will you use the next time?)

# Anger Management

- Many parents refuse to allow their children to express unpleasant feelings – especially anger.
- Anger is normal and not bad in itself.
- If anger isn't allowed to be expressed, negative feelings persist.
- The problem is not anger itself, but not properly managing it.
- Most people do not know what to do with their anger.
- Passive-aggressive behavior (PAB) is the worst way to handle anger.

# Passive-Aggressive Behavior

- The absolutely worst way to handle anger
- Opposite of open, honest, direct verbal expression of anger
- Gets back at another person indirectly:
  - Stubbornness
  - Dawdling
  - Procrastination
  - Forgetfulness
  - Sabotaging
- The subconscious purpose is to make the other person upset, angry, hurt, or feel guilty.
- PAB is the cause of most problems with teens: poor grades, drug use, sexual misconduct, anti-social or anti-authority attitudes, suicide attempts, or committing crimes.

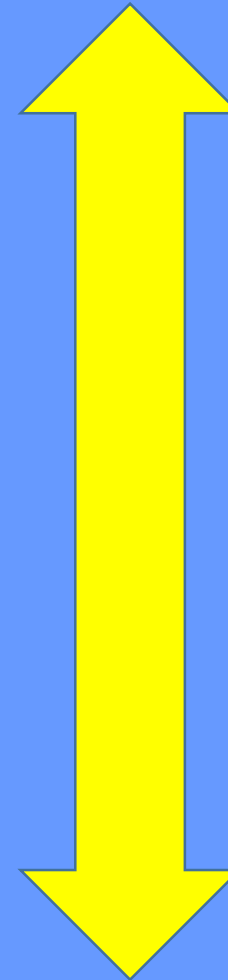
# More Passive-Aggressive Bad News

- PAB can turn unresolved anger into psychosomatic problems – headaches, ulcers, skin problems.
- If a teen doesn't learn better ways to manage anger by age 16 or 17, PAB can become a permanent trait of his personality, and he will use PAB toward teachers, professors, employers, his spouse and his children.
- PAB is very common.

# The Anger Ladder

1. Pleasant behavior
2. Seeking resolution
3. Focusing anger on source only
4. Holding to the primary complaint
5. Thinking logically and constructively
6. Unpleasant and loud behavior
7. Cursing
8. Displacing anger to sources other than the original
9. Expressing unrelated complaints
10. Throwing objects
11. Destroying property
12. Verbal abuse
13. Emotionally destructive behavior
14. Physical abuse
- 15. Passive-aggressive behavior**

More Positive Behavior



More Destructive Behavior

# Training Your Child in Anger Management

- Be approachable and calm; don't overreact
- The most effective training is YOU modeling great anger management.
- Find a time soon after you have both calmed down. Help him to get out of the immediate intensity of his anger, for example:
  - 3 long, deep breaths
  - Go to pleasant atmosphere, perhaps outdoors
- Let your child express negative or unpleasant feelings
- Praise them for bringing their anger to you so you can help them resolve.
- Use descriptive praise: "I'm proud of the way you handled your anger. You were honest and talked it out instead of \_\_\_\_\_. That shows maturity."
- Help him to progress to using the positive (top five) ladder steps.

## Recommended Books

- |                                      |                         |                                |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. A Spirituality of Living          | Henri Nouwen            | Your relationship with God     |
| 2. Calmer, Easier, Happier Parenting | Noël Janis-Norton       | Using descriptive praise       |
| 3. How to Really Love Your Child     | Ross Campbell           | Important foundations          |
| 4. How to Really Love Your Teen      | Ross Campbell           | Keeping the Connection         |
| 5. Shepherding a Child's Heart       | Tedd Tripp              | Spiritual training             |
| 6. Mama Bear Apologetics             | Hillary Morgan Ferrer   | Teach truth discernment        |
| 7. Hold On to Your Kids              | Mary Pipher             | Parental vs peer attachment    |
| 8. Teaching Kids about God           | Trent, Osborne & Bruner | Intentional about the goals    |
| 9. The Smart Stepfamily              | Ron L. Deal             | The challenges of stepfamilies |

## Recommended Websites

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. <a href="https://mamabearapologetics.com/resources/">https://mamabearapologetics.com/resources/</a>                     | Resources for discerning truth        |
| 2. <a href="https://puritygodsway.com/sexual-purity/for-parents/">https://puritygodsway.com/sexual-purity/for-parents/</a> | Resources for teaching kids about sex |