

The Moral Compass

Conference Teaching Plan

Sexual Purity

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In the summer of 2001, over 1100 Oklahoma students were surveyed on the subject of sexual purity. Over half of the students surveyed (52%) said the number one place they got information about sex was friends or movies (36% friends / 16% movies). Only one in three (30%) said parents, although when asked, “In your opinion, who *should* be responsible for educating a child about sex?” almost 90% responded with a reference to parents.

Talking to children about sex has always been difficult for parents. It presents many problematic questions, such as:

- ✓ “Is a **‘talk’** really necessary?”
- ✓ “What questions will they (my children) ask?”
- ✓ “Will I have to go into my **past**?”
- ✓ “Will I have to talk about the anatomy of it all?”

If the youth minister has been a way out of “the talk,” then parents have been opting out. Scarier still is the fact that the youth minister has really only been an option for those parents whose youth attend church. Otherwise, the sexual education of children has been handed over to the schools and that presents a whole other set of problems. The church has the message, but not the role. Parents have the role, but aren’t delivering the message. Let’s look at society’s plan for sexual behavior and compare it to God’s view, then discover who is responsible to communicate God’s plan.

God’s Plan for Sexual Purity

1. Society’s Views

Society has its own teachings on sex. In general, there are two distinctives about society’s position on teen sexuality.

- a. Society takes no **moral** stand and **accepts** that students will engage in sexual activity. It approaches the subject from a physical health standpoint, seeking to help students protect themselves from disease and pregnancy.
- b. Society views sex, not as an **intimacy** builder within a committed marriage relationship, but rather as an **expectation** of passion. That is, society simply expects that sex will occur between two passionately involved people. It follows, that since sex is a natural expectation of passion that its value is merely recreational and should not be bound by the confines of marriage or the emotional constraints of intimacy.

2. God’s Views

God **created** the sexual union between a man and a woman. He invented the pleasurable act of sexual intercourse. Therefore, sex is not a bad thing, but rather a good one. He also created the context for this union: **marriage**.

God's design for sex is to build **intimacy** in the relationship between a husband and his wife. Sex is a part of God's blessing within the marriage relationship. Another portion of this blessing is the fruit of this union: **children**.

We are quick to tell people that our children are a **blessing** from God, but we will do everything in our power to keep from telling our kids about the **blessing of** God which resulted in their birth (Sex). Why is that? It's because we see sex as something dirty and wrong.

Sex becomes something taboo and dirty when it is removed from God's **designed context** of marriage. It takes something precious and valuable (one's purity) and treats it as common and disposable. It is like taking an original Monet or Renoir, removing it from its' frame, and using it as a rag to check the oil level in your car.

By teaching society's view of sex to your children [either on purpose (you accept society's views) or by default (you don't teach anything, so society teaches for you)] you are teaching them that their personal purity is worth more used up than preserved. It's the same as telling them that those invaluable works of the masters are worth more as oil rags than preserved pieces of art.

3. *Emphasizing the benefits*

Both views of sex would agree that there are dangers associated with sexual activity, but a major difference exists within those views as to the approach in dealing with those dangers. Society seeks to educate people as to the dangers associated with sexual activity by informing them of those dangers and how to "**safely**" avoid them. God seeks to have people commit to purity and its benefits, which will help them "**completely**" avoid any dangers. It is the difference between running from consequences (focusing on the worst), and running to blessings (focusing on the best).

Students will not avoid **pre-marital sex** because they are well acquainted with the consequences of promiscuity. They will remain pure because they are **committed to purity** and desire its benefits.

A.C. Green

Basketball Player with the World Champion Los Angeles Lakers:

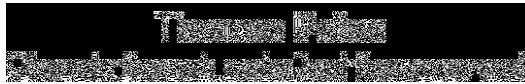
"I'm proud to say that I am a virgin, and I don't hide the strength God has given me. You have to learn to respect yourself before you can start respecting other people."

(Source: A.C. Green Youth Foundation, Inc., 1-800-AC-YOUTH)

Some of the benefits of purity are:

- ◆ Waiting gives honor to God's plan and order in your life.
- ◆ Waiting is a **symbol** of radical allegiance to Jesus.
- ◆ Waiting holds purity as a precious treasure, which is to be protected and preserved.
- ◆ Waiting denies the possibility of a contracted STD or **chance pregnancy**.

- ◆ Waiting retains for a single person, within marriage, what is appropriately theirs.
 - ◆ Waiting refuses the worldly view that true love requires **sexual expression** for fulfillment.
 - ◆ Waiting gives us power over sexual drives, opening the possibility for experiencing the highest in sexual expression.
 - ◆ Waiting avoids the **spiritual damage** that comes with lost purity.
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- ◆ Waiting helps us stay on a straight and narrow path, which helps us avoid contracting other polluting traits of a decaying world.
 - ◆ Waiting exercises and shows a self-control, which gives us a greater sense of self-worth.



Who is responsible for communicating this plan to students?

God says: **Parents!**

Parents are responsible for morally educating and giving direction to their children. Deuteronomy 6:6-9 says, *“These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”*

The scripture couldn’t be clearer. Parents were instructed to take the ten commandments of God and raise their children according to them. The commandments were a picture of God’s love and promise. If the people lived according to them and passed them along to their children, they would enjoy His blessings within a life lived in “a land flowing with milk and honey.”



Students say: **Parents!**

Over 90% of students surveyed said that information they receive about sex should come from their parents. Less than one in three says their info concerning sex comes from mom and/or dad.

How do I communicate God’s Plan?

1. Establish the priority

The Moral Compass stands as a strategy to help parents with more than just educating their children about sex. These conferences will also focus on such topics as: building honesty in your students. However, we intentionally

initiated this project with the subject of sexual purity because we realize this area of concern for parents is critical and universal. All parents seek in some way to help their children with sexual issues because the dangers are so devastating. It is imperative then, that as a parent, you establish the priority of addressing this issue with your children. You need to:

- a. Accept God's directive to be the **moral educator** of your children. (Deut. 6:6-9)
- b. Pray for God's wisdom, timing, and **individual care** in teaching your children. (His wisdom is needed to give you insight for day-to-day conversations, recognition of teachable moments, understanding of youth culture, etc. The age at which your child starts learning about these issues should be determined by His timing. For some it may be the fourth grade, for others maybe the sixth grade. Seek His timing for your child. Each child is an individual and should be approached uniquely with a consistent message. One size does not fit all. Individual care is required.)
- c. Determine to **live** according to the principles you teach. (You are teaching the value of purity. This still pertains to you in your walk with Christ. As a married individual you will not be sexually abstinent, but you should be practicing moral purity in what you watch, how you speak, the way you dress, etc.)
- d. Accept that moral education is more about the **journey** than the **destination**. (George Leonard, a then, 67-year-old black belt in aikido, said the following in 1986, "For ten years I have run an aikido school near San Francisco. I've had the striking experience of watching students show up the first day with excited eyes, only to drop out quickly, at an alarming rate. Only 1 or 2 percent will make it to black belt. Most of the casualties are young men who are mainly concerned with looking good. They are usually preoccupied with overnight progress, with getting ahead without the necessary long-term practice...we've got to accept the fact that mastery...is a journey, not a destination." The moral education of your child is more about the journey he or she will take to become what God desires more than it is about following a checklist of do's and don'ts. You are their compass, not their transport.)

2. Dealing with your issues

In order to begin an intentional on-going dialogue with your child on this subject, you must deal with those personal issues, which would keep you from ever speaking.

- a. *Comfort in addressing the issue*
How do you get comfortable talking about sex? Do you sit down with your child at breakfast and cleverly slip it into the conversation, "Well, how is the Raisin Bran? Oh, by the way, did you know that boys and girls are anatomically different?" God created, designed and approves of sex in the right context. The issue of sexual purity is more about *healthy relationships* than biology and anatomy. Instead of **fretting** over explaining the explicit physical details, **anticipate** the opportunity to explain to your child that a great sex life is found within the loving, encouraging purity of a committed marriage relationship.

b. *Your past and your child's past*

The **baggage** of your past or the **success** of your past can be a critical help to your communication of moral truths to your child. It just needs to be approached in the right way. Some keys:

- Don't **glorify** your past. No good comes from *glorifying sin* (talking almost glowingly about your many dalliances) and no good comes from *glorifying self* (bragging about your uprightness as a teen).
- Your children have not been **predestined** to commit your mistakes. Do not approach them as if they were you. Many times we prejudge our children based on the mistakes we once made. They are not us. Don't make assumptions about *them* based on *your* past. Try to confine your guidance to where they are in life, not to the assumptions of where you think they are going.
- You do not have to go into every detail of your past. *This should cause everyone to breathe a sigh of relief.*
 - a. If your past was flawed, teach about **consequences** (Example: "Son, I didn't follow God's plan like I should and here are some of the consequences of my behavior: I was filled with guilt; I lived in fear of disease; I lost the ability to know who to trust; etc.).
 - b. If your past was exemplary, teach about **benefits** (Example: "Sweetheart, I felt so lucky to be giving my purity as a gift to your father on our wedding day. I had no regrets, there was no guilt, and sex was celebration of God's wonderful plan in bringing us together.").
- Consider that your child may have a "past" as well. The goal of your instruction should be to emphasize God's plan for purity, which includes forgiveness
[A recent government mandated study of 26, 000 teens found that over half of the teens' mothers (of those student who were sexually active) did not know that their children were having sex. Could there be something in your child's life of which you are unaware? Be sensitive to the fact that there may be things in your child's life that need to be received with the tender arms of forgiveness.]

c. *Questions that your child may ask*

Your child may ask some stiff questions. Think through the possibilities and be ready to give an honest answer. Some questions that may come up are:

- What did you do?
- Why can't I make my own mistakes?
- What if we're in love?
- Is God just opposed to people having fun?

3. Different Approaches/Creating Opportunities

- a. Sex talks that don't work
 - **One-time** graphic anatomy lesson.
 - **“Look it up”** approach.
 - The bad **analogy**.
 - **Avoidance**

- b. Teachable moments
 - **Accidental** – Some teachable moments happen by accident. You are riding in the car together and see a billboard for a Gentleman's Club and your son or daughter blurts out, “Why would any girl want to dance in that kind of place?” It wasn't planned, but the door just swung open on a teachable moment.
 - **On Purpose** – You can design teachable moments. If you take your teenager to a Crisis Pregnancy Center to work for a day, cleaning up, answering the phone, etc., you have created an opportunity to teach.

 - Tips on *Teachable Moments*
 - ✓ Don't break into a **speech**...especially a prepared, standard, “they've heard it a million times” speech.
 - “If you play with fire, you'll get burned. If you get burned, you'll get scarred. If you get scarred, then you'll need counseling. Counseling costs plenty, and frankly, we just don't have the money!”
 - ✓ Ask good **questions**:
 - “What kind of man would go and watch her dance?” (In response to remark about the billboard.)
 - “I thought I had a grasp on all the consequences of an unwanted pregnancy, but I learned a few new ones today. What did you learn?” (In response to going to the Crisis Pregnancy Center.)
 - ✓ In teachable moments, often the lesson is **obvious** and **specific**. Use the moment for that purpose and don't stretch the meaning and end up losing its' powerful value.

- c. Q & A – The art of listening
 - Q & A can be powerful as a part of a **regular** exchange with your teenager. It varies in length, time, and subject matter.
 - *Length*: It may be a minute or two or it may be an hour. It will vary.
 - *Time*: It may be before school, after school or late at night.

- *Subject Matter*: It may be light-hearted or it may be serious. It might be about a friend or it might be about them. It might be about sports or it may be about God. However, Q & A is not helpful as a “*Sit down and let the inquisition begin*” type of activity.
- Ask **open-ended** questions and not “yes” or “no” questions.
 - “Is everything alright with you and Regan?” “*Yes.*”
 - “Do you like her mom?” “*No.*”
 - ✓ Better: “If you were Regan’s mom, how would you handle Regan’s problems at school?”
- Ask specific, rather than general, questions. (Example: Instead of asking, “How was school today?” and getting “Fine.” Try asking something like, “What kind of teacher is Mr. Schuler? I’ve heard good and bad. What do you think?”)
 - Note: If you use Q & A, be prepared to answer as many questions as you ask. This is an exchange, not an interrogation.

d. Family Devotions

- Pick a day and time and make it a **priority**.
The problem that most often occurs with using family devotions as a means of communicating values is that the devotions are often sporadic (giving the impression that this time together is not really that important), or seen only as a knee-jerk reaction to a specific problem (“Our son is developing a smart mouth...it’s time for a family devotion!”), or the devotion is impromptu and doesn’t serve any real needs (“So, how did you guys enjoy that study on the lineage of Christ?”)
- Make it **fun**. (Games, music, variety)
The second big problem with family devotions is...they’re boring! If these meetings are a priority, then plan ahead. Make it worth attending.
- Make it **special**. (Create different atmospheres, celebrate special occasions, affirm one another)
 - The devotion approach could be used effectively on an individual basis as well. (Example: Meet with your teen one-on-one and journal together through the New Testament.)
- Resources are available from many Christian publishers that will help you select topics and give you outlines for studies.

e. Vital attitudes and actions in approaching your child

- **God’s word** is the final authority. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
Let your children know that God’s word is the final authority for your family. His word will rule your behavior, and it will be the standard for which their code of conduct will be developed.
- **Don’t be judgmental**.
Because we know our own children so well, we seldom listen to their explanations and start basing our opinion/decisions on our experiential knowledge of their past behavior. Resist this temptation. Everyone deserves the right to be heard. Sometimes our judgments are wrong.
- **Be honest**.
- **Be comforting**.

- Be “*care*”fronting. This is as opposed to ”*confronting*.”
God says He disciplines us like a father who loves his son (Heb. 12:4-11). God will not be shy about bringing up an issue that needs to be dealt with in your life. He loves you too much to let it slide. However, His approach is not one of condemnation, but of caring love. Also, He never lets what He knows will be your response to His discipline stop Him from “*care*”fronting you. You need to be a **parent**, not a **peer**.
- Be **consistent**.
Talking to your child about sex is not a “one-time” shot. A parent’s life must be consistent with the values the parent teaches. Practice what you preach.



4. Setting boundaries (Parents & Students)

Students want to know the boundaries for their behavior and activities and the principles behind the setting of those parameters. It should be a guideline that makes sense, is fair, and is consistent with scripture. When setting boundaries for yourself and for your teenager use biblical standards in your determination; considering the following issues:

- a. Dating
 - What kind of person will I date?
 - What is the **starting** age for dating?
 - What are the guidelines for **group** dates or **individual** dates?
 - What are acceptable and unacceptable places to go?
 - What is my **curfew**?
- b. Culture
 - What are the guidelines for my **dress code**?
 - What are the guidelines for what I can **view**?
 - What are the guidelines for my **music**?
- c. Contracts - Sometimes a written contract can be used to clearly articulate the guidelines for acceptable and unacceptable behavior, and to outline the *consequences* for breaking the contract. (*Website reference: www.kidscontracts.com*)
 - Include:
 - ✓ **Type** of people to date
 - ✓ Length of dates
 - ✓ Determine quantity of time spent alone
 - ✓ Curfews
 - ✓ **Off limit** places
 - ✓ Church attendance

- ✓ **Phone Rules** (Time spent on phone; calling if there is trouble or a change in plans, etc.)
- ✓ **Consequences** for breaking contract
- ✓ **Parent Response** (Include statements that will address such issues as how parents react to situations, waiting until the next morning to ask questions, etc.)
- ✓ *Optional: 40 Hour Rule – A person has to spend 40 hours getting to know the parents of the person they are wanting to date before they will be allowed to go out with them.*

d. Church commitment

- **Nonnegotiable** regular attendance
Church attendance should be mandatory. This priority insures that the student will be put in a situation of encountering God's word and instruction at least once a week.
- **Parent and Child**
This church attendance should apply to both the parent and the child.

5. Making it possible

- The key element in a child's determination to pursue purity, is the parent's personal involvement in that child's relationships. The parent shouldn't act as an intruder, making decisions about every detail of the relationship or always being present, but rather being actively involved with and aware of the people with whom their child spends time. A parent's neglect or misuse of this involvement will communicate either an uncaring attitude or an over-protective posture. Seek a happy medium by being informed but not controlling or manipulative.

Tips:

- ✓ Don't be a **matchmaker**. That's not involvement. That's being a nuisance; and it *doesn't* communicate purity.
 - ✓ Be a **facilitator**. Open your home. Create times for you to observe your child in relationship and for the person they are dating to observe your family.
- Options for relationships
 - ✓ *Dating* – Dating tends to be more casual than courtship. Dating relationships may vary from casual friendships to serious prospects for marriage. Dating serves as a way to get to know people. The knock on dating is that an emotional and physical intimacy develops too quickly in these casual, non-committal relationships.
 - ✓ *Courtship* – Courtship usually springs from a friendship which has the desire to grow into something more. It is a committed relationship, from the beginning, intended to result in marriage.

- ✓ *Good principles to apply to either choice*
 - **Seeking** and **receiving** the approval of parents before entering into a romantic relationship.
 - Waiting to start a **serious** relationship until you are at the age where you could consider getting married. Many students graduate high school having never learned how to form good friendships, much less, good dating relationships. Waiting to get serious is a good rule of thumb.
 - Entering into the relationship with the **purpose of pursuing** the idea of marriage, not just going out for fun with no serious intentions.
This is in direct opposition to what most parents tell their children. They say, “Why don’t you date around, instead of getting serious?” And this seems to fit what was previously suggested about not getting serious too soon, however, what tends to happen in many casual dating relationships is an unintentional emotional bond forms between the people dating. Once that emotional bond is formed, then whether the person one is dating is the right person for them or not becomes inconsequential, because they are now involved and it is very difficult to break off those types of relationships.
 - **Setting high standards for physical purity.**
The number one question students ask regarding sexual purity is, “How far is too far?” If the standard is purity, then the answer is, “Not very far.” Once physical involvement begins, the law of diminishing returns kicks into gear. The law of diminishing returns says that what satisfies for the moment will lose its’ ability to satisfy with time and will seek a new heightened sense of fulfillment through new activity. Holding hands is fun, but with time it loses its’ thrill, so kissing starts. Kissing is great, but eventually it moves to petting and so on. Setting high standards builds self-worth and keeps one off the road to guilt and moral failure.

➤ Modeling the behavior

- ✓ If you are married, the relationship you have with your spouse should model the type of **relationship** and **purity** you would want your son or daughter to have with his or her future spouse.
- ✓ If you are a single parent, the relationships you model in your dating life should reflect the purity you desire to see in your student’s life.
- ✓ The standards are not different for you in regard to purity. What you **watch, listen to**, take part in, all reflect the standard you *will* pass on. If you desire to pass on **purity**, you will have to model it.

- Encouraging good decisions
 - ✓ Too often we **erupt** at bad decisions, but fail to encourage our children when they make good ones. Everyone needs encouragement, and your children are at the stage in life where it is critical to their self-esteem. Find both **simple** and **creative** ways to express your appreciation and respect for a well-made decision.

Sexual Purity Scripture References

Proverbs 5:7-9

Proverbs 5:20-23

Proverbs 6:27-29

Proverbs 7:6-9

Proverbs 7:21-25

Romans 14:1-15:7

1 Corinthians 5:9-13

1 Corinthians 6

1 Corinthians 10:23-24

2 Corinthians 5:15

Colossians 2:16-17

Colossians 2:20-23

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

2 Timothy 2:22

1 Peter 1:17-19

2 Peter 2:19