

HILLARY MORGAN FERRER

WITH AMY DAVISON



MAMA  
BEAR

*Apologetics*<sup>®</sup>

GUIDE  
*to*  
SEXUALITY

EMPOWERING YOUR KIDS TO  
UNDERSTAND & LIVE OUT GOD'S DESIGN

“With compassion, empathy, and an unwavering commitment to Scripture, Ferrer and Davison equip parents and children to defend the biblical sexual worldview. And they do not mince words when it comes to the political agenda that is pushing sexuality on kids. Through Christlike love, this book is a call to arms to defend those held captive to sex-education curricula and its damaging ideas.”

**Josh D. McDowell,**

bestselling author and speaker

“As is typical for the Mama Bear team, the *Mama Bear Apologetics*® *Guide to Sexuality* transforms confusion into clarity, anxiety into action steps, and polarization into Christ-centered partnership. This book is a must-read for anyone seeking to equip kids to biblically navigate gender, sexuality, and the cost of discipleship.”

**Elizabeth Urbanowicz,**

founder of Foundation Worldview

“The *Mama Bear Apologetics*® *Guide to Sexuality* is a timely and helpful book. Hillary tackles some of the thorniest issues of sex and identity today, and yet she does so with compassion, insight, and biblical clarity. And she also offers some practical steps for communicating these ideas to kids. I hope you will get a copy and start implementing these ideas today.”

**Sean McDowell, PhD,**

associate professor of apologetics at Biola University  
and the author of *Chasing Love*

“Sex is never just about sex. Teens and young adults often cite biblical sexuality for the reason behind their rejection of Christianity. That is why *Mama Bear Apologetics*® *Guide to Sexuality* is a crucial resource for every parent. Hillary and Amy address the most relevant and confusing aspects of parenting in the shifting sands of sexual morality in our culture, giving examples from research, media, and education. They present foundational and complicated truths in a format that is easy to understand and apply. This book will equip you to navigate the discipleship journey with your kids with grace and truth.”

**Dr. Juli Slattery,**

author of *Rethinking Sexuality* and founder of [sexualdiscipleship.com](http://sexualdiscipleship.com)

“As mothers and avid readers, we can’t recommend this book enough. The culture is poisoning the hearts and minds of our children with a twisted vision of human sexuality and identity. Ferrer and Davison not only expose these lies, but they also replace them with a wonderful vision of the beautiful and breathtaking design God intends for human sexuality. This book will help you become the wise and trusted guide your kids need, leading them to the life-giving truths about love, sex, and identity that God has for His image bearers.”

**Erin Kunkle and Sarah Stonestreet,**

cohosts of *The Strong Women Podcast* by the Colson Center

“Hillary’s book is an important parent resource to identify, deconstruct, and offer clarity to today’s distorted views of sexuality. God has already created an ideal for humanity and sexual integrity, and this book reminds us to stay faithful to His truth.”

**Monica Leal Cline,**

founder of It Takes a Family

# MAMA BEAR

## *Apologetics*<sup>®</sup>



GUIDE  
— *to* —  
SEXUALITY

HILLARY MORGAN FERRER  
WITH AMY DAVISON



HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS  
EUGENE, OREGON

*This book is dedicated to all those who have been willing to take up their sexual crosses and still follow Christ, even when it hurts.*

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# Contents

Introduction: My Kid’s Cartoon Showed <i>What?</i> — <i>Why I Needed This Book Yesterday</i> . . . . .	7
Part One: Things I Probably Already Knew...But Kinda Forgot	
1. Sexually Set Apart— <i>How Sexual Holiness Is a Nonnegotiable for Disciples of Jesus</i> . . . . .	21
2. Sex Is Spelled W-O-R-L-D-V-I-E-W— <i>Wait, What’s a Worldview?</i> . . . . .	35
3. A Pretty Great Design, When Followed— <i>How Gender, Marriage, Sex, and Family Show Us the God We Can’t See</i> . . . . .	49
4. Demolishing Arguments, Not People— <i>Releasing Ideological Captives</i> . . . . .	67
Part Two: Wait, My Kids Are Being Taught What?!	
5. Are You Sex Smarter than a Fifth Grader?— <i>Understanding the New Sexual Education Standards</i> . . . . .	83
6. The Enemy’s New Playbook— <i>The Language and Morality of the Sexual Agenda</i> . . . . .	101
7. The Genderbread Person— <i>The New Definitions of Identity, Expression, Sex, and Attraction</i> . . . . .	115
8. Sex-Positivity— <i>Anything Goes if It’s Consensual</i> . . . . .	131

Part Three: Things That Are Tripping Everyone Up

9. Pornography— <i>It's Not Technically Sex if You're By Yourself, Right?</i> . . . . .	149
10. Same-Sex Attraction— <i>Hurting People to Be Loved</i> . . . . .	171
11. Gender Identity— <i>When Birds Identify as Bees</i> . . . . .	191
12. Purity Culture— <i>When Our Best Efforts Went Kablooney</i> . . . . .	213
13. Taking Up Your Sexual Cross— <i>Because We're All Born That Way</i> . . . . .	231
Afterword: Things to Repeat to Your Kids Until They Want to Gag— <i>The Lasting Effects of a Good Maxim</i> . . . . .	245
A Final Word . . . . .	255
Notes . . . . .	257

## Introduction

# My Kid's Cartoon Showed *What?*

*Why I Needed This Book Yesterday*

HILLARY AND AMY

Once upon a time, the sex talk was simple. It was still mortifying for both parties, but it was simple. For the little ones, you talked about the anatomical differences between boys and girls. Where do babies come from? I'm so horrified glad you asked! You discussed how those anatomical differences allowed the mommy and the daddy to make a baby, praying that the kids didn't ask for more details. As they got older, you discussed God's design for marriage and God's purpose for sex within a marriage. You read some verses from Ephesians, gave a very (very) light study from Song of Solomon about the goodness of sex (but only within marriage—DON'T DO IT OUTSIDE OF MARRIAGE!!!!). And then you turned these fully prepared (\*cough\*) youngsters over to the youth pastor, who taught them who-knows-what out of a study guide on purity. Phew! Glad that's over.

One question though: How's that been working out for us? How'd that work out for *you*? Does it feel like we're winning the culture war on this one? Because it doesn't to us. We are losing so badly that many people have just given up and opted for the "safe sex" talk because any discussion of abstinence is just laughed at. Like, *How cute! As if you can convince teenagers not to have sex...you're funny!*



To paraphrase legendary fighter Mike Tyson, everyone has a plan until they've been hit. The church, unfortunately, is no different. Between hyper-fundamentalism, the fallout of purity culture, and the at-times graceless response to LGBTQ issues, the church has taken more than its share of hits. As Dr. Juli Slattery points out, the problem isn't that the spiritual battle defending biblical sexuality isn't worth having. The problem is that the church *doesn't know how to fight*.<sup>1</sup> And the fallout isn't pretty.

Pew Research Journal conducted a survey on views regarding sexuality and found that 57 percent of Christians believed premarital sex in a committed relationship was fine, while 50 percent said that hookups (sleeping with someone you aren't committed to) were no biggie!<sup>2</sup> According to one study, upward of 80 percent of unmarried evangelicals between the ages of 18 and 29 have had sex.<sup>3</sup>

We parents aren't doing much better. Many of us grew up in a "don't ask—don't tell" household when it came to discussing sex, and we've happily carried on the tradition with our kids. For some of us, the silence is rooted in fear. We're afraid that if we talk about sex, then our kids will want sex. Or perhaps you are only now shaking off the weight of toxic sexual messages that were piled upon your teenage shoulders. The last thing you want is to make your children feel the same guilt and shame you did. And others just don't know what to say. Heck, we don't even understand how the biblical sexual worldview is a critical aspect in our own walk with Jesus, let alone how to explain it to our kids.<sup>4</sup> Instead, we rely on middle school health class, our kids' friends, and social apps to do the legwork for us.

Church, can we come together for a moment and acknowledge a hard truth? This isn't working. Our kids *want* us to talk to them about sex. No really, they do. When the Power to Decide campaign surveyed thousands of students, do you know who teens ages 12 to 15 overwhelmingly said had the most influence on their sexual decisions? *Parents*. Do you know who also won the influence race with teens ages 16 to 19? *Parents*.<sup>5</sup> Don't let their perpetual AirPods use or eye rolls fool you: Our kids are listening. Let's start talking.

That is why you have this book, Mama Bears. You (and your husband)

are your child's primary teachers. *You* are the youth pastors of your home. And God has given you everything you need to shepherd your family in the truth while holding fast to loving like Christ. The enemy has come in and tried to confuse these categories, but that's where we at Mama Bear Apologetics come in. The area of sexuality is like one giant knot—its knots even have knots. Our hopes are that, through this book, we can slowly unravel the threads of confusion surrounding the area of sexuality.

Naturally, there is a lot to unpack here. As much as our nerdy selves would love to do an in-depth study of each and every topic, we realize we are competing with naptime, busy schedules, and an acceptable word-count for popular-level books. (You mean not everyone wants 800-page, multivolume books? Pshaw.)

*What we aim to present here is a biblical perspective, to backtrack how the enemy has broken God's good design, to emphasize a loving attitude toward real, hurting people behind each of these issues, but to also tackle the topics in a way that you can start reinforcing biblical sexuality for your children. Are you up for it?*

## **Amy's Story**

I was recently hiding from the Texas heat and watching TV with my kids. With three prepubescent boys, my vote for *Call the Midwife* was (unsurprisingly) outvoted, so we cuddled up to catch the latest episode of *The Loud House*. This show follows a preteen boy, Lincoln Loud, as he navigates life with ten sisters.

That day, the Loud family was trying to figure out which sibling had been the recipient of a love letter. It had been addressed only to *L*, which presented a challenge—everyone in the family had a name beginning with *L*! As the show progressed, each sister confronted her Valentine crush with a love note, hoping her beloved was the secret admirer. Each sister, that is, except budding rock star, Luna.

Luna was too nervous to talk to her crush, but she spent a majority of the show casting dreamy looks toward a group of kids whose ringleader was a guitar-toting heartthrob. (Boys and guitars—am I right?) With some

last-minute encouragement from the Loud tribe, Luna slipped a love note into her crush's locker and ducked around the corner just as the group came down the hall. It looked like dream-boy was about to discover Luna's note...but he walked right past the locker. In the last few moments, however, my boys and I watched as guitar-boy's bandmate, *a girl*, opened the locker instead. The credits rolled as the two girls shared a googly-eyed stare.

The whole scene lasted only a few seconds, and if I had been scrolling through Pinterest I would have missed it. I glanced at my kids, and thankfully the younger two had been distracted by Legos. My ten-year-old, however, had not. He turned to me with a confused look and said, "Wait, what just happened? Does she like girls?"

And just like that, my son was introduced to the LGBTQ world. Through a cartoon.

## We're Not in Kansas Anymore

I (Hillary) sometimes joke about how the Lord teaches twice—in the lecture and the lab. The "lecture" is the actual biblical teaching—right theology, wisdom gleaned from the Word. Amy's story reflects what I jokingly refer to as the "lab" portion of learning. The lab portion is where the Lord brings opportunities for you to put into practice what you've learned. Anyone who's ever prayed for patience knows what I mean. The lecture portion is fine; it's the lab portion that knocks you to your knees. Upon embarking on this book, Amy immediately realized how real and imminent the sexual agenda was—all the way down to cartoons.

We wish we could say that this was an isolated incident, but it's not. When we crowdsourced the question on social media, asking Mama Bears to share stories of LGBTQ characters in kids' shows, we had more than 150 comments *within the first hour*. With increasing frequency, television characters are involved in same-sex relationships. Children frequently have two mommies or two dads. Why this influx all of a sudden? Simple: our culture has shifted.

Back in our day (and yes, we realize how old that makes us sound), kids' programming typically matched the biblical model, with heterosexual

couples and romances. But now that our culture has redefined the family, we've seen that cartoons, music, and programming in general have shifted to follow suit. This makes sense when we remember that art mimics life... but that doesn't mean that it'll always reflect truth.

Art mimics life, but that doesn't  
mean it reflects truth.

Amy's not the only parent who's been thrown for a loop here. You could tell your own stories about how you've seen the corruption of sexuality in our culture. Many parents have no idea what a worldview is, let alone that their children's cartoons are projecting one which isn't biblical. (We'll address that in chapter 2.) It snuck up on us while we were busy trying to figure out how this new math worked. (Why can't we just carry the tens anymore?!?) It invaded our homes while our radar systems were focused on decoys. We missed the warning signs, and now we're in damage-control mode.

And that's why we are glad you've come here—to this safe place where we totally understand that worries often stem from uncertainty, and uncertainty comes from not understanding. In this book, we want to help you know and understand what is going on in our culture. We want to help you to define what's happening and empower your kids to live counterculturally while standing up for truth...without becoming the playground morality police.

Our kids need to be equipped so that they can refuse to call evil good, good evil, and lies truth. And make no mistake—that is what is being demanded of them. While some people like to compare this situation to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego being forced to bow before a statue or be thrown into the fiery furnace, I find that our kids have difficulty drawing the comparison. There's no physical statue and no actual furnace. But we do have evidence of Christians being required to pay lip service to another god or else face the consequences.

## Say It or Else!

The Roman Empire was considered a bastion of tolerance according to ancient standards. All religions were generally accepted, and their adherents could worship whoever, whatever, and however they wanted—provided their worship didn't disturb the peace or create loyalty conflicts between them and Caesar. To weed out the troublemakers, there was basically one rule: once a year, everyone—no matter their religion—was required to offer a pinch of incense and say the phrase “Caesar is Lord.” The temple dudes didn't care if you believed it or not. As long as you *said it*, then you were given a certificate that allowed you to buy, sell, and trade in the marketplace. No certificate, no business. Most people were willing to do this because they were already pluralistic. Why not? What's one more god? Sure, Caesar is Lord. Whatevs.

The Christians and the Jews, on the other hand, had difficulties with this. According to both the Old Testament and the New Testament, our words matter. They could not speak this lie while maintaining a clear conscience before God.

Some within the faith tried to cut corners, thinking they could just obey Caesar in body and worship God privately in their hearts. These people (the ones who were willing to compromise on this technicality) were the first to crumble once real persecution came. Pliny the Younger noted these “Christians” in a letter he wrote to Trajan. Once arrested, not only would they worship the statue of Trajan, but they could be persuaded to “utter imprecations against the name of Christ.” (An imprecation is basically a curse.) On the flip side, he notes that “there is no forcing, it is said, those who are *really Christians* into any of these compliances...I judged it necessary to try to get at the real truth by putting to the torture two female slaves, who were said to officiate in their religious rites; but all I could discover was evidence of an absurd and extravagant superstition.”<sup>6</sup> (This superstition was that Jesus was resurrected.)

Summary: once you start compromising in the little things, it's easy to compromise in the big things. The ones who refused to compromise at

the temple when things were easy were the ones to stand firm in the jail once things got hard.

While nobody is getting tortured yet, we are facing a looming crisis where we Christians will be required to pay lip service to the god of our age—sex. Our kids are being desensitized, song by song, cartoon by cartoon, numbed to the point where immorality feels like no big deal. We want them to be able to dispense with the false ideas about sexuality that our culture sends their way, which means we need to start discipling them yesterday.

Instead of pointing us to God, sexual pleasure has become a god in itself. Sexuality is our ruler, one who must be obeyed and to whom we must pay homage in word and in deed. Cloaked in the language of morality, our children are being fed lies that could lead them to kneel at the altar of pleasure. The call to open their eyes to these lies is a godly conviction.

All of that starts with calling out cultural lies for what they are. After reading the first *Mama Bear Apologetics* book, a reader told me, “These lies were all around me in culture, and I just didn’t see them. But now I do. And now that I see them, I can’t not see them.” That’s our goal for this book as well—to shed some light on the lies so you’ll know them when you see them. As we discuss each one of these messages, we’ll hold it up to the Word and let godly wisdom inform our thinking.

## Here’s What to Expect

Part 1 focuses on the biblical view of sexuality. We look at how the way we view sexuality is actually a make-it-or-break-it issue for being a disciple of Jesus (chapter 1). Sexuality isn’t just some side aspect of Christianity; what we believe about what’s done in the bedroom reveals what we *really* believe about God, others, reality, and ourselves (chapter 2). While people might think that the core of the sexual revolution is pleasure (and that is a big part of it), an even bigger issue is the idea of *authority*, meaning who has the right to determine what we do with our bodies (chapter 3). And we’ll frame how all of these topics should be approached—with love for people who are held captive to bad ideas (chapter 4).

In Part 2, we dig into the actual standards and curricula that are being taught to your kids. Chapter 5 introduces us to the New Sex Education Standards and the worldview behind them. Chapter 6 discusses two incredibly powerful tactics—moralization and repetition—that are causing our kids to be confused about what is true. Next, we discuss how words are being changed, stolen, and smuggled, leading our society to adopt new standards of morality, all the while thinking these new morals are supported by Scripture. Chapter 7, “The Genderbread Person,” is an *actual* curriculum that is being used in elementary schools across the country and will give you a cursory understanding of the new sex and gender terminology that your kids are coming home with. Chapter 8 addresses the sacred cow that undergirds everything: sex-positivity. This philosophy teaches your kids that the *only* things that matter with sex are mutual consent and physical pleasure.

In Part 3, we go over the specific things that are tripping everyone up. Chapter 9 describes how our bodies are created to chemically bond with our sexual partners, and how the porn industry has hijacked our kids’ brains and started grooming them to consume and perform sexually explicit material. Chapter 10 helps elucidate the same-sex debate from a compassionate yet scientific, psychological, and theological perspective—tackling the biggest arguments that revisionist and gay-affirming advocates have used to cause the church to embrace a revised view of sexuality. Chapter 11 dives deep into the gender ideology that seems to be steering all our upcoming legislation, while providing practical tips so that your kids don’t get confused about their identity in Christ. Chapter 12 takes a look at how we as a church attempted to address all these issues back in the ’90s...and how it totally blew up in our faces. For these chapters, you’ll recognize the popular ROAR format (*recognize* the message, *offer* discernment, *argue* for a healthier approach, and *reinforce* through discussion, discipleship, and prayer). The final chapter reminds us where the real battle is—encouraging us to take up our crosses daily to follow Christ and have compassion on one another.

As an added bonus in the Afterword, we go over things you’ll want to repeat to your kids until they want to gag because, as we note in chapter 6,

the human brain has difficulty distinguishing between truth and familiarity. There's power in good maxims to reinforce a biblical worldview, and we're not ashamed of using them! Our kids need good, bite-sized pieces of wisdom to combat the colorfully glittered bad philosophy that parades across their Instagram feeds.

### Three Type of Readers

One of the things I (Hillary) have been convicted of from the moment I started speaking in public was recognizing the variety of personalities within my audience. What feels like a refreshing new idea to one parent feels like overload to another. So before we start on this book, I want to acknowledge three very different mom-types who might be reading this book.

#### *Group 1: It's All My Responsibility*

Some of you reading this book feel that everything is your responsibility—from organic meals and Baby Beethoven to homeschooling and driving your kids to AWANA. If it will benefit your child, you'll give it a try. These are all good things! The care and thought you give is why you are holding this book. You understand the gravity of raising kids in this secular world. You are doing your absolute best, and it feels like if anyone puts one more straw on your back you will finally collapse under the weight. If this is you, please sit for a moment and acknowledge that. Praise God for the ways you take responsibility for shepherding your children! However, there is also a time to rest. Consider saying the following prayer before embarking on this book:

*Father God, I know Your yoke is easy and Your burden is light. I desire to please You by being faithful with my children. Lord, please teach me how to release that which is out of my control. As I read this book, I pray that the enemy's voice of condemnation would be silenced. Lord, convict me of things where I need to improve, but please protect me from feelings of guilt or inadequacy as I learn this new information. Show me the things You*



*would have me do to raise faithful, godly children, and help me to release them back to You, knowing that You are a good, good, Father.*

### **Group 2: It's All God's Responsibility**

Another group reading this book has mastered the art of resting in Christ's sovereignty, which is a good thing. However, it can sometimes lead to assumptions that a good Christian school, a flourishing youth group, and a few dinnertime conversations will suffice for raising their children in the faith. This group may be less aware of the seriousness of the lies that culture is peddling to our kids, and might need a swift kick in the pants to realize that this world is entirely different from the world in which they grew up. We can't raise our children the way we were raised because the world in which we were raised is gone. If this is you, then be prepared for a wakeup call! It will be tempting to feel like there is too much to be done, and you might want to stick your fingers in your ears and sing, "La la la la!"

Please don't. It's not too late, and it's not too hard. There is grace for not being a perfect parent. Don't give up! My prayer is that the Holy Spirit would be with you in this book, convicting and motivating you to be the warrior your kids need to raise them up in a robust Christian faith, understanding sex as a beautiful gift of God. And here's a prayer you can offer:

*Lord God, I thank You for the rest I have in You. I praise You because You are sovereign. There is not a single bird that falls from the sky without Your knowledge. Lord, I confess the times when I have used my faith in Your providence as an excuse to not engage the culture. Lord, I pray You would open my eyes to ways that I can be actively training my kids. I pray You would reveal my blind spots. I pray for wisdom, and I pray for discernment against the enemy's lying tongue, bringing condemnation where You are trying to bring conviction. Give me the strength, Lord, to face these issues head-on, so that I might be a parent who purposely shepherds my kids to resist cultural lies. I do all things knowing that You are with me.*

### Group 3: I've Already Blown It

It is naive to think that all the readers of this book have squeaky-clean pasts. We have a God who came to remove our shame and bring beauty from ashes. That being said, I believe many of us are still walking in sexual shame and don't even know it.

Dealing with shame is not a process we can rush, any more than we can rush the process of grief. Grief is not fun, but it is *healthy*. It is *necessary*. It is practically a *requirement* for emotional healing. We cannot repress grief; it will come out in some other way. Similarly, there is no fast-tracking the repentance and healing process.

And here's where I want to make a bold thesis. It is not until we have come to terms with our own sin—fully acknowledging, fully confessing, fully grieving, and fully receiving God's forgiveness—that we can finally walk in freedom. And freedom is what I want for you and your children, friends! *Experiencing God's freedom from our sexual past is key to being able to talk to our kids about sex in a healthy way.*

Some of you have experienced sexual abuse or trauma and are still walking in bondage to a burden placed on you by another. For these Mama Bears, let me speak from experience that the Lord is faithful. Some healing comes quickly and some slowly. Never give up! Praise Jesus for the amazing counselors who are out there. He has given us His Word, and He has also given us His medical and counseling ambassadors who can help walk us through the damage that comes from sexual trauma. For you, I pray the Lord would bring healing to the parts that have been broken so that you can walk in freedom from a burden you should never have had to carry.

For other Mama Bears, freedom means receiving the forgiveness that God offers *and then forgiving yourself*. I have known amazing women, godly wives and mothers, who live in fear that someone will discover their past. For you, I want to pray peace and hope. The Lord has removed your sins as far as the east is from the west. You are *free*, Mama Bear. Don't let the enemy tether you to what the Lord has freed you from.

Now, we might have some Mama Bears who are currently in sexual sin. To you, I implore: please realize your worth. My prayer for you is that you

would see yourself the way the Lord sees you. He wants freedom for you. Sexual sin is the only sin Scripture calls “sinning against your own body” (see 1 Corinthians 6:18). In Romans 1, sexual sin is referred to as people “degrading themselves with one another” (see verse 24). *Do not believe the enemy’s lie that degrading yourself is empowering.*

Each one of these types of bondage can lead to difficulties in talking with our children about sex. Slavery to shame can result in fear-based teaching, confusing kids as to the innate goodness of sex within marriage. Slavery to sin results in a “do as I say, not as I do” type teaching of sex, or even a tacit permission to sin because deep down you don’t believe young people are capable of controlling their urges. Whatever your bondage, it will likely be passed on to your kids when you talk about sex. It’s not an insurmountable issue. But it’s something to keep in mind and something to pray about as we go through this journey together.

## A Final Word

We are going to address a lot of topics in this book—both from a biblical perspective and from the secular perspective, which is trying to rewrite God’s commands regarding sexuality. My prayer for you is that you don’t let the pervasiveness of the secular worldview overwhelm you. We need to be aware of the adversary’s schemes so that we can properly defend against them. *We can’t defend against that which we don’t understand.* There is power in understanding the enemy’s playbook. There is power in preparing to meet these schemes head-on, and we can empower our children to do the same—with grace, love, and truth.

You’ll find problems here of which you might have been blissfully unaware, but ignorance isn’t safety. Think of this book as if you’d discovered the enemy’s manual and now, for the first time, you can actually prepare your kids for what is coming.

Get ready, Mama Bears. It’s time to ROAR.

## Part One

# Things I Probably Already Knew...But Kinda Forgot

### PRAYER OF LAMENT<sup>1</sup>

#### *Turn to God*

#### LAMENTATIONS 1:5; 3:19

Our young children have gone into captivity before the enemy. We pour out our hearts like water before You, Lord, for the lives of our children. O Lord, earnestly remember what has come upon us! Look down and see our reproach, our national disgrace!

---

*Lord, hear our prayers. We are desperate. Who else can we turn to? Where else can we go? You are our only help and refuge from the onslaught of the sexualization of everything, from the normalization of all things contrary to Your will. Our kids are in a world of trouble.*



# Sexually Set Apart

*How Sexual Holiness Is a  
Nonnegotiable for Disciples of Jesus*

HILLARY

In the year 2000, Hollywood graced us with the poignant and moving cinematic masterpiece *Dude, Where's My Car?* The film follows two dim-witted deadbeats who, after a night of binge drinking, cannot find their car and have unexpectedly acquired an otherworldly device about which they know nothing. Well, not nothing. They know exactly two things: It's a mysterious and powerful device, and its mystery is only exceeded by its power.

A mysterious and powerful device, you say? Of which its mystery is only exceeded by its power?!?! *That*, my friends, is sexuality. *Selah*. (That's Christianese for "meditate on that for a hot second.")

While I am joking about the movie being a masterpiece, the mystery and power of sex are no laughing matter. You might even call sex the first command. God was like, "Here's your garden; be fruitful and multiply (wink!)." As Clay Jones explains, "All Adam and Eve had to do all day long was to garden and play with creation's *only* physically perfect and completely naked member of the opposite sex."<sup>1</sup>

The idea that sexuality should be guarded is not very popular. Our society sees it as just a prudish phase we went through back in the Victorian

era. Thanks to Freud, we are now supposedly enlightened, understanding that sexual repression is basically the gateway to all mental illnesses. Be free, little birdies! It's for your own good! Don't listen to those religious nutjobs. They all craaaaaazy.

Christians are often accused of being obsessed with sex or afraid of sex because we uphold the biblical teaching that sex is intended for husband and wife...and because we speak up when abstinence is excluded from the options laid before today's teens. We believe that far from portraying sex as a dirty act, Scripture teaches that sex is good! God created it! There's even a whole book of the Bible celebrating it. As my old pastor used to say—from the pulpit, no less—“God is not a killjoy. We serve the God who *created* the orgasm.” Unfortunately, our live-and-let-live world can't understand why such an awesome gift shouldn't be shared with as many partners as possible.

But let's take things back a bit...or a lot. If we are to understand sexuality, we must go back to the very beginning. As we will show later in the chapter, sex is intended to be a *sign* of the covenant between husband and wife. Every time a married couple makes love, they are—in bodily form—*repeating their marital vows*. God doesn't place limits on sex because He wants to downplay the goodness of sex. He places limits on it because sex has *meaning*, meaning that our culture has lost.

To be fair, our culture hasn't just lost the meaning of sex; we've actually lost the meaning of *meaning*! Postmodernism teaches that there is no such thing as inherent meaning. Meaning is now a social construct, *imposed* upon things by us humans. We determine meaning. We determine truth. We're fashioned into little gods who can speak truth into existence...or change it on a whim.

If you read the first *Mama Bear Apologetics* book, you know how prevalent the postmodern ideology is. Which brings me to a sad truth: if our kids can't understand the concept of unchangeable, inherent meaning, then they will never understand that *sex* has unchangeable, inherent, meaning. They will not understand that sex carries a message, and that we do not have the authority to tamper with that message. When we tamper

with God's plan for sex, we miscommunicate the truths that God had intended to be seen through the marital union.

The message the world is telling our kids is that one's preference for sex is no longer even a preference; *it is a person's very identity*—a foundational aspect which can neither be questioned by others nor restricted.

Our world treats sex as the inviolable truth on which everything rests. It's the big kahuna of human experience to which everyone has a right. Secular culture sees itself as the champion of the most powerful and important aspect in the world, and we Christians as the great buzzkill, trying to downplay the awesomeness of sex.

Okay, fine. We'll play that game for a second. Let's just grant briefly (for the sake of argument) that sex *is* the most important thing in the world. Shouldn't we then ask, "Doesn't *every* important and powerful thing involve boundaries and protection from misuse?" Seriously. Name one other thing that is super important and super powerful that isn't carefully guarded or meticulously controlled (nuclear warheads, controlled substance prescriptions). In fact, the *more* important and powerful something is, the *more* it is usually safeguarded. Why wouldn't we expect the same to be true about sex?

Since God created sex, He is the only one who truly knows what it means, what it communicates, and how powerful it really is—and how destructive it is when misused.

## Set Apart from the Beginning

God's commands regarding sex are not just a side issue. They are a prominent theme spanning the Old and New Testaments, especially in terms of holiness. The word "holy" literally means "set apart for a special purpose." As Christians, our sexual ethic is a major way in which we are called to be set apart from the world because sexual holiness is, in essence, a *sign of our knowledge of and commitment to God*. It has always been this way.

Throughout Scripture, we see how God's people have been called to sexual holiness—how they are to be sexually set apart. Let's take a cursory



overview through the Old and New Testaments to see exactly how serious the Lord is regarding this topic.

### *The Old Testament: Whoring After Other Gods... Oddly Not a Metaphor*

I recommend reading through Deuteronomy 22:13-25 and Leviticus 18 and 20 to get a thorough overview of what God defines as sexual immorality and how seriously He takes it. One might notice that He's *really* thorough in these passages. His commands regarding sex aren't just revealing sexual boundaries; God is actually describing the culture that the Israelites were coming out of and the culture they were told to conquer.

Yahweh prefaces the Levitical sex laws by saying, "I am the LORD your God. You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you" (Leviticus 18:2-3). God then proceeds to list everyone (family members) and everything (animals) with whom to *not* have sex. After this extensive list, He restates His original purpose for sexual holiness: "Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled" (Leviticus 18:24). In other words, *This is how I am calling you to be set apart from the rest of the world! Don't mess it up, or I'll remove you just like I did them.* (And if you keep reading through Judges and Chronicles, you'll see that that's exactly what happens.)

Israel struggled with sexual idolatry from the start—and kept returning to it throughout the course of its history. There are a few pockets here and there where they are faithful to God. But more often than not, they fell right back into the practices of the nations whom they were told to drive out of the land.

The Canaanites were not—as some people might think—just a poor, unsuspecting people who were just trying to live their lives in peace. (Admit it...you've thought this before, haven't you? It's okay. I did too, once upon a time.) But if you really dive into Canaanite history and culture, at some point—after you've recovered from your nausea—you start

to think that maybe, *just maybe*, this was a culture that needed to be wiped out.<sup>2</sup>

I cannot even begin to describe the kind of sexual debauchery that was going on in Canaan before the Israelites got there. I've never played a drinking game before, but if I were going to, I'd use Mountain Dew, and I'd do a word study of the usage of the word "whore" in the Old Testament. I remember a pastor reading through Ezekiel 16–20 and thinking "Holy schnikes, I've never heard someone say *whore* this many times in a row." It's also prevalent in the book of Hosea. When I was younger, I assumed that "whoring after other gods" language was merely metaphorical, symbolic of Israel's spiritual adultery. (And yes, it's true that the Lord uses the word this way. After all, we the church are also called the "bride of Christ" throughout the New Testament. The picture of marriage is a common theme with God and His people.) But after studying ancient Near East practices, I came to the horrifying realization that whoring after other gods was not—I repeat, *not*—purely a metaphor. People were literally worshipping other gods by having temple orgies.

The Asherah poles and the "high places" described in Scripture were giant phallic symbols. According to pagan worship, the gods needed to be stimulated into giving up the goodies—fertility, rain, and crops. So how do you stimulate the gods? By basically providing a veritable smorgasbord of live religious porn—complete with incest, child abuse, homosexuality, and... things that should never be done with a goat.<sup>3</sup> In this culture, sex with the temple prostitutes was the height of religious piety. I suspect there were lots of "very religious men" in this culture. "Honey, I'm going to church...again."

And what would they do with all the babies that were born from these sex-capades? They'd burn them on the altar to Molech.<sup>4</sup> Child sacrifice is just one more of the detestable practices of Canaan from which God called His people to separate. And before you ask (like a woman did in a lecture that my husband John and I gave on the Canaanites), "How could anyone allow such a thing to happen in their community?" remember this: *It's still happening*. Our culture serves its own Molech. It's called Planned

Parenthood. Children always have been and always will be the victims of our sexual immorality. We have not changed. We have not progressed. We've just gotten better at hiding (and renaming) our child sacrifices.

And just in case you are *still* wondering how seriously God takes sexual sin, hop over for a moment to Numbers 25. This is one of those Bible stories that will *never* be reenacted on a felt board in Sunday school, but it's an important read. Moses is giving a verbal smackdown to the entire nation of Israelite men for sleeping around with the Midianite women. In the middle of his rant, some moron traipses through the crowd with a Midianite woman on his arm and disappears with her into his tent. Aaron's grandson Phinehas sees this, follows them in, and skewers them with a spear... *in the middle of the deed*. How does God respond? He gives Phinehas and his descendants an eternal priesthood for being so zealous for the Lord. Our sexual faithfulness *really* matters to God.

### ***The New Testament: Pointing Back to God's Design***

The New Testament also has quite a bit to say on the topic, though not necessarily by Jesus Himself. And some people find that to be a problem. Since Jesus didn't explicitly condemn all the same sexual practices prohibited in the Old Testament (like homosexuality), some feel that His silence is tacit approval for all sexual unions. But this is just a logical fallacy called "the argument from silence." When Jesus came, He didn't spend much time reexplaining God's sexual law because He was speaking to Jews, and the Jews *already knew how God defined sexual immorality*. They had studied the Jewish law for centuries. If we were to take Christ's silence on topics as permission, then we could justify almost anything—sex with animals, sleeping with your mom, harvesting people's organs for profit, you name it. Don't get sucked into this bad argument.

When Jesus *did* speak on sexual morality and marriage, He stuck with the K.I.S.S. method ("Keep It Simple, Stupid") and simply pointed His Jewish audience back to their own Scriptures, back to God's original design—"A man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh" (Matthew 19:5, quoting Genesis 2:24).

Later, in Romans 1, the apostle Paul describes the descent of a culture down into oblivion. The passage begins with people who know God but don't really care about worshipping Him (verse 21). Then their minds and their hearts go stupid (verse 22). They start worshipping something else (verse 23), and God gives them over to what they think they want: lots and lots of sex (verse 24). A few orgies later, their sexuality goes from depraved to unnatural (verse 26). At the end of the whole process you are left with a group that doesn't even know what good looks like anymore. Take a peek at verses 29-32, friends. This is our society's future if things continue as they are.

They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

Sexual morality is emphasized in almost every New Testament epistle, especially the ones aimed at Gentiles, who didn't have the benefit of centuries of Jewish law. Sexual immorality is not only mentioned, but it's usually mentioned first in the long lists of sins that a Christ-follower *must* forsake—no ifs, ands, or buts.

- 1 Corinthians 5:9-13: Paul is so emphatic on sexual holiness that he commands church members *not to associate with those who call themselves Christians but engage in sexual immorality*.
- Ephesians 5:3: Paul says that there shouldn't even be a hint of sexual immorality among believers—not even in jest.
- Colossians 3:5: Believers are told to put sexual immorality to death.

- Galatians 5:16-19: Sexual immorality is contrasted with the fruit of the Spirit.
- Revelation 2:13-16: A lax attitude regarding sexual immorality is a deal breaker, even in a church that is faithful in almost every other way.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8: This might be the most convicting passage of all! It is God's will that we avoid sexual immorality, and "anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God."

This is just a small sampling of verses which explicitly tell us that being set apart as a Christian is synonymous with sexual holiness. The number of references expands considerably once you include all the passages that condemn umbrella categories like "deeds of the flesh" or "unrighteousness" or "wickedness," since elsewhere sexual immorality is included under these umbrella terms. I'm not sure how much more explicit we need the Bible to be. How are professing Christians getting this so wrong?

Maybe your teenager is asking, "Where *exactly* does the Bible *specifically* say sex outside of marriage is wrong?" Read 1 Corinthians 7:9 together: "If they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion." Paul is not offering marriage as the only and ultimate remedy for dealing with sexual desire (he sings big praises for staying chaste single as well). Nor is he saying the *only* reason to get married is so you can have sex. What he is saying is that marriage is the proper alternative for the sinning already going on. Ask your teen this: If Paul's *solution* to sexual immorality was to get married, then what do you think the Corinthians' original *problem* was? (Hint: People having sex outside of marriage!)

To which your child then tries to justify, "But they didn't have a category for long-term, monogamous, committed relationships." Stop it. Yes, they did. It was called betrothal, and it was like our engagements but more binding. (Note how Joseph was betrothed to Mary, and he couldn't just take the ring back. To break it off, he had to divorce her—and that's before

they ever got married and consummated the relationship. Jewish committed relationships were even more committed than ours!) Paul closes this loophole when he addresses those who are betrothed. If their passions are too strong—meaning they're going to go crazy if they don't have sex—then by all means get married! A person looking for loopholes will always make things sound more complicated than they are in the hope that the text doesn't say what it clearly says.

A person looking for loopholes will always make things sound more complicated than they are in the hope that the text doesn't say what it clearly says.

It should be clear by now what God says about sexuality. But the question on every teen's mind is *why?* *Why* does God define sexual morality in such a narrow way? It seems like an arbitrary rule. If sex is so wonderful and a gift from God, why would He try to limit it so much? The answer is simple, but it won't make sense if you don't understand the power and purpose of sex.

### The Purpose of Sex

All conversations with our kids about sex need to include a very important concept: *Sex is a married couple repeating their marital vows in bodily form.* Now I don't normally point to Hollywood for transcendent truths about sex, but there is a line from one movie that has always stuck out to me. In the movie *Vanilla Sky*—not one I'd recommend for casual viewing—two characters, Julie and David, have a lot (and I mean a *lot*) of what we would consider “friends with benefits” sex. Later in the movie, when David meets a woman with whom he actually falls in love, Julie goes absolutely psycho. She screams at him, “Don't you know that when you sleep with someone, your body makes a promise whether you do or not?”

It's a surprisingly accurate (though incomplete) statement for a Hollywood movie. The act of sex is not just a promise: it is a reference *back* to a promise that was already made. As Tim Keller says in his article “The Gospel

and Sex,” “Sex is a covenant renewal ceremony for marriage, the physical reenactment of the inseparable oneness in all other areas—economic, legal, personal, physiological—created by the marriage covenant.”<sup>5</sup> It is the bodily recitation of “the self-forgetting, self-transcending, self-giving” promise that was made on the couple’s wedding day.<sup>6</sup>

What are you doing when you engage in the act of sex before committing to the covenant of marriage? Lying. You are lying. You are repeating a promise that you never made. Our bodies though, unfortunately, cannot tell the difference. Which brings us to the power of sex.

### Things That Are Powerful Enough to Be Guarded

If we are to talk to our kids about sex in a way that makes sense to them, we must first establish a few categories in their heads. First is, “Things that are so powerful that they need to be guarded with boundaries,” and the second is, “Things that are good or bad depending on how they are used.” Fire gives a useful analogy for both categories.

Ask your kids, “Is fire good or bad?” Some might say good because they are thinking about roasting marshmallows or soaking in a bathtub surrounded by scented candles (yes, please!). Some might say bad because they are picturing forest fires or explosions. The truth is, fire as a concept is neutral; it can be good or bad depending on how it’s used.

Here’s another question for your kids: how powerful is fire? If they were already picturing a forest fire, then they’re on the right track. Not only is fire powerful, but it can be used to accomplish great feats of strength that we’d never be able to do on our own.

Using fire, we can blow holes through solid rock on a mountainside, cook food, provide light, purify metal. . . you name it! Or we can burn down half of California. Fire is most beneficial when it is contained within proper boundaries and most dangerous when removed from its proper place. A fire within a fireplace can create a warm and inviting home. Take it outside the fireplace, and it can destroy everyone and everything you love in the blink of an eye. *Long story short, fire can help create and fire can help destroy. That it can do both is our first clue that it should be handled with caution.*

## Enough About Fire, You Pyro...

The same line of thinking can be applied to sex. Is sex good or bad? Well, it depends on how it's used. Sexual intimacy can be used to forge bonds of intimacy between man and woman that not even Hades can separate. It can literally create a human being—from scratch I might add! Sexual energy is *really* powerful. Sexual desire—when channeled toward one's spouse—reemphasizes the vows that they made to love, honor, cherish, and protect till death do they part. When a couple takes their marriage vows seriously, they fortify their marriage, stabilize their home, and create strong families in which children can thrive. Strong families create strong communities, which lead to a strong society.

But just like fire, sex can be used to destroy as well. The sexual impulse, without restraint, can devastate an individual and destroy a marriage. If sex is—as we've stated—a recommitment to the marital vows, then even sex within a marriage can be misused. As Christopher West says in his book *Our Bodies Tell God's Story*,

Treating a spouse merely as an object for one's selfish indulgence is never an act of love. Few Christian men understand this critical point. The books and programs that have flooded the Christian market to help in our "pornified" culture rarely get this either. The main goal of these programs is to help husbands direct their sexual desires toward their wives—a good first step, of course. But rarely, if ever, do these programs invite men to examine *what kind of desires* they're directing toward their wives.<sup>7</sup>

I have known far too many women who have been at the receiving end of this misuse of sex. Just because he put a ring on it, he feels that he can come to his wife and demand sexual gratification as much as he wants or in any way he chooses. Such demands in no way reflect a Christlike *agape* love which honors and cherishes his wife as a person. These demands, even if made within the confines of marriage, can undo what sex was intended to do. Rather than reinforcing, these selfish acts of lust *nullify* in bodily



form the promises he made on their wedding day. And this is not just for men. Ladies, we are not off the hook. The way we initiate or respond to our husbands sexually should also reflect the vows we made to him.

So as you have probably noticed by looking around at our culture, sex misused outside of marriage—without reaffirming a lifetime commitment—often produces broken hearts, broken families, unwanted or aborted babies, and way more venereal diseases than should ever exist. Sex misused within a marriage—without the self-giving *agape* love promised on the wedding day—can hinder a marriage. Like fire, sex can create and sex can destroy. That it can do both is our first clue that it, too, should be handled with caution.

### **Who Are Really the Ones Obsessed with Sex — Christians or Secularists?**

We have established that sex can be good or bad depending on whether it is properly channeled or contained. We have established that sex is extremely powerful. Let's go one step further in our analogy and discuss the ways that one can interact with something that is extremely powerful and potentially dangerous. Back to our fire analogy!

There are two extreme ways one might interact with fire: as an arsonist or as a fireman. Question: who of these two do you think is more obsessed with fires? I'd say they are equally obsessed, just in different ways. One is obsessed with creating as much fire as possible, and one is obsessed with containing fire to prevent destruction. The arsonist doesn't care about the consequence; he only cares about the flame. The fireman doesn't hate fire—I'm sure he loves a good campfire just as much as the next person. But he takes great pains to make sure that a flame doesn't turn into a raging inferno. Firemen put their lives on the line to help curtail the negative impact of fires gone wild. Arsonists just stand back and enjoy the show.

Our world treats sex like an arsonist treats fire. Who cares about consequences? Sex, sex, and more sex! As the arsonist hates anyone who tries to put out his fires, so our world hates anyone who rains on their sex parades. They look at the church and assume we are a bunch of dumpy, frigid,

sexually repressed schoolmarms sitting atop our moral high horses, wagging our fingers and chastising people for having too much fun.

Like it or not, we as Christians are called by God to be set apart, and one of the defining characteristics of His followers is sexual holiness. And now we can understand why! He didn't make boundaries because He wanted to control us or stomp on our fun, but because He wanted sex to retain its original meaning. God desires for us to experience real, lasting, flourishing fellowship with Him and with others. As we'll see in chapter 3, we flourish best when we stick to the beautiful design He created.

## Discussion Questions

1. **Icebreaker:** Has there ever been a time when you underestimated the power or danger of something and got hurt? What happened?
2. **Main theme:** *Sex is a very powerful bodily recitation of our marital vows; anything powerful enough to create or destroy can and should be carefully guarded.* What's the most powerful thing you can think of? Are there any kind of controls or regulations that govern it? What do you think would happen if there were no guidelines for it?
3. **Self-evaluation:** What were you taught about sex growing up? Was it treated as something good? Something dirty? Did your family even talk about sex? Have you ever been tempted to think that sex was "no big deal"? What are your thoughts on it after reading this chapter? How seriously does God take sex? Why do you think that is?
4. **Brainstorm:** As a group, compile a list of powerful and dangerous things in the world that should be treated with caution. Nuclear bombs? A rabid raccoon? You name it. Make sure you have a clear category in your head of "things that are so powerful that they need boundaries." (Because you're going to do this with your kids next!)
5. **Release the bear:** Here's a fun discipleship idea! Create a secret handshake with your child and give it a meaning that involves a

promise. It could be something like, “I’ll love you forever and ever,” or even, “I’m sorry, and I’ll try to do better.” Use it often in place of the words, showing your child how they can *use their bodies to restate a promise that was already made with their words*. Ask them frequently if they remember what it means and have them recite it to you. Later, when they are old enough for “the talk,” you can tell them how sex is the way adults use their bodies to restate their wedding vows to their spouse.

6. **Pray:** Have you treated sex with the gravity God describes in Scripture? Pray and ask the Lord to work in your heart to understand sex the way He does. Pray that He would show you when to start having these conversations with your kids so that they can understand the goodness and power of sex.