



# ***How to Teach Your Children About Sexual Identity***

Last in a 3-part mini-series titled: *Trending*  
Part of the larger 10-week *Family Bundle* series

Pastor Matt Friend – October 14 & 17, 2021  
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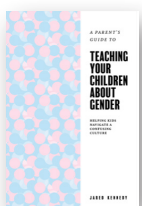
## **– OUTLINE –**

### ***What's today's big idea?***

God designed the Christian home to be a haven where our kids can learn about sexual identity.

### ***How can we teach our children about sexual identity?***

- #1 – Celebrate with your kids the gift of being made in God's image, male and female.
- #2 – Support your kids' interests. Don't overreact if they don't fit cultural gender stereotypes.
- #3 – Teach your kids that sex is a good gift, but it's not ultimate.
- #4 – Warn your kids against discontentment, excuse-making, and sin's empty promises.
- #5 – Show genuine care and empathy towards kids who persistently struggle, continually pointing them to Jesus.



### ***Resource Recommendation***

***[A Parent's Guide to Teaching Your Children About Gender](#)***

By Jared Kennedy



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## **– NOTES –**

### ***Introduction:***

We live in a culture that is rapidly growing increasingly gender fluid and gender neutral. By that I'm referring to the fact that—in our society—"male," "female," "boy," and "girl" no longer means what it once did. When I was growing up, sex was synonymous with *gender*. Not anymore. One's sexual identity now refers to their biological makeup, while one's gender now refers to their personal sense of identity, or the one they want.

- This week the New York Times ran an article titled, "Superman Comes Out: DC Comics Ushers In a New Man of Steel."
- CNN ran a story on the same issue titled, "The Power of a Queer Superman."
- Lego announced this week that it plans to phase out gender stereotypes in toys. So, at some point in the near future, our kids will not play with Lego men and women, but androgynous creatures that are neither male nor female.
- This hit home to my family and me a few weeks ago at the WVU homecoming game. For the first time ever (and going forward), WVU will not have a homecoming king and queen. Instead, they will crown "homecoming royalty," doing away with the male and female distinctions.
- Last time I checked, Facebook gives users 71 different gender options.

Each of these issues is a discussion in and of itself; however, what I'm most concerned with today is the toll it is taking on our children. More and more parents tell our pastors and staff, "My kids



are asking questions about these things, and I don't know how to respond.”

In the next few minutes I'll give you one thing to know and five things to do.

### ***What's today's big idea?***

God designed the Christian home to be a haven where our kids can learn about sexual identity.

### ***The big idea explained:***

The greatest place for kids to learn about sexual identity is in the Christian home. Though it's not always a reality in our broken world, this has always been and always will be God's design for families in this fallen world.

*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. (Deuteronomy 6:5-7)*

The references to “heart,” “soul,” and “strength” cover just about everything, including sex and sexual identity. If our kids are to leverage their whole being to love God, then we must include the realm of sexual identity in their discipleship.

When it comes to the education of our children, we are free to farm out certain things. Sarah and I have one child who graduated from public school and is now at a public university. We have one high schooler who is a home schooler. Our youngest is thriving at Bible Center School. As parents, we can certainly collaborate with our child's health teacher, science teacher, and coach; however, at the end of the day, it is ultimately our responsibility to teach our



children about sex and identity.

## ***How can we teach our children about sexual identity?***

#1 – Celebrate with your kids the gift of being made in God’s image, male and female.

God created our sexuality. Male and female sexuality is central to what it means to be human.

*Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. (Genesis 1:26-28)*

“God created Adam and Eve, the first human beings, in His own image—equal in worth and dignity—distinct, similar, and interdependent as male and female. The divinely ordained differences between male and female reflect God’s original design and are meant for human good and flourishing.” [-BCC Member Statement of Faith](#)

The male/female differences aren’t the result of Adam and Eve’s sin. They aren’t a tragedy to be overcome. Instead, they speak to the very fabric of how God has made us. We are a people of two sexes, designed by God to complement one another. By nature, boys are designed (though not exclusively) to be providers and protectors. (This isn’t just a money thing; it’s an all-of-life life thing.) By nature, girls are designed (though not exclusively) to be more nurturing and relational. No two men are alike, and no two women are alike. However, a world without women cannot fully reflect the image of God just as a world without men cannot. Both sexes/genders are needed.



Our maleness and femaleness run much deeper than our genitalia. It's inscribed in our genetic code, with the Y chromosome being the marker that distinguishes males from females. It's in our brain and hormone chemistry. (For instance, females typically have higher levels of estrogen; males higher levels of testosterone.) It's even in secondary sex characteristics like our facial hair, muscle mass, and skeletal structure.

So, *male* and *female* are categories of biological sex. There is no in-between. There is no spectrum. There is no third sex. In our culture today, all kinds of sociological jurisprudence exists on how we perceive sex; nevertheless, sex itself is biologically constrained to male or female.

What about the "intersex exception"? Yes, there are very rare cases of someone being born as intersex, which simply means that the person is born with one or more atypical features in their sexual anatomy or sex chromosomes. This is a very small percentage of the human population. The medical terms for intersex conditions are differences or disorders of sex development (often called DSDs). However, 99.98% of people with an intersex condition (which, again, is a very rare group) are still biologically male or female. The other 0.02% of those diagnosed with a DSD are anatomically both male and female.

In age-appropriate ways, our kids need to know that their bodies are gifts from God. Gaining awareness of their bodies and learning appropriate names for body parts gives young kids a foundation for understanding sex and gender. Young kids need to be taught that some parts of their bodies are private and should only be touched when they need help in the bathroom, in bathing, or during a doctor's visit. During the adolescent years, continuing these conversations can help teens know they aren't crazy as their bodies change and they experience new impulses and desires.

Parents are responsible to teach their children, who already have a given gender, the kind of character that's necessary to be a godly brother or sister, functioning single man or woman in society,



perhaps a godly wife or husband, and (if God gives them children), a mother or father.

“By creating them as male and female, God invested their bodies with strengths and weaknesses that would bind them together in mutual dependence as they fulfilled the creation mandate. The woman’s body would allow her to cultivate new image bearers, but this would also make her more vulnerable. The man’s body would be unable to bear life, but his physical strength would allow him to protect and provide... The differences between them were not an end in themselves... They were the means by which they would together cultivate the good bounty of the earth and their own bodies. Together they would rule and reign over the new creation as King and Queen.”  
–Hannah Anderson & Wendy Alsup

There are places in the New Testament (such as Galatians 3:26-28) where we see that there’s no favor with God (nor should there be extra favor shown in the family of God) for one’s gender or sexual identity. All ground is level at the foot of the cross and all ground should be level in Jesus’s Church; however, the NT does not erase our gender any more than it erases our ethnicity. God is building a people—men and women—of every kindred, tongue, tribe, and nation. Our differences complement one another.

#2 – Support your kids’ interests. Don’t overreact if they don’t fit cultural gender stereotypes.

Evelyn Bassoff, a psychologist and author of *Between Mothers and Sons*, tells the story of a celebrated bullfighter from Madrid who disappeared one evening during his own victory party. After searching the entire house, one houseguest finally found him in the kitchen, washing dishes. The guest was aghast. He couldn’t swallow the idea that a bullfighter—the pinnacle of masculinity in Spanish culture—would be engaging in what he thought of as a woman’s work. When he asked the bullfighter what he was doing,



the bullfighter looked him in the eye and stated, “Sir, I am a man. Everything I do is masculine.”

In the previous point, I urged you to see that God made mankind male and female—that is, a person’s gender corresponds with his or her biological sex. Gender is, in this sense, fixed. It cannot become whatever we want it to be, because our gender is a part of our personhood.

However, while our true gender is fixed, it’s important to affirm ways in which gender expression varies from person to person—even in the Bible.

Think, for instance, about the two patriarch brothers, Jacob and Esau. They were both men. But Jacob imaged forth God’s orderly rule in the kitchen: he made a legendary lentil stew! Esau, on the other hand, expressed his masculinity as a hunter (Gen. 25:24–28). Jacob and Esau were different boys, and it’s not just Jacob and Esau.

There are a range of ways masculinity and femininity are expressed across relationships and cultures today as well. In Scotland, for instance, a kilt is a masculine cultural expression. In the United States, wearing might seem unusual on most occasions. Gender expression always takes a cultural shape, and it doesn’t emerge identically across all times and places.

Let’s be careful to ever make a law, command, or stereotype not found in the NT. Phrases such as “Boys don’t cry” or “A woman’s place is in the kitchen” should be eliminated from our vocabulary. Instead, parents should call both their daughters and their sons to be transformed by Christ, from the inside out, and to live out their unique gifts as a godly man or woman.

Is it okay for our girls to hunt and fish or for our boys to sew and cook? I know many women—here in our church—who love to hunt and fish, yet they are just as much a woman as any other woman.



I know many men—here in our church—who are wizards in the kitchen, yet they are just as much a man as any other man.

I get it. A certain degree of anxiety about our kids is understandable. A very feminine mom can struggle to relate to her tomboy daughter. And if dad is a man's man who loves to hunt, it can be hard to accept a sensitive son who prefers the kitchen to the woods. Instead, what if we encouraged them to pursue their desires and work hard, while still valuing their masculinity and femininity?

Boys and girls, men and women all enjoy a good meal! Fellas, if you like to eat, then learn to cook—and to clean up after! Your mom (or your wife) is not your slave! Our daughters—on the same note and for the same reason—need to know how to pump gas, take out the trash and mow the lawn, whether they ever get married or not. We don't want to send any of our children into the world half-prepared!

Let's love our kids. That's what they need. Let's show affection to our kids. Let's pray for our kids. Encourage your son or daughter, whether they are doing dishes or shooting guns, to do their best and to enjoy life. And don't cry when they beat you at target practice. 😊

#3 – Teach your kids that sex is a good gift, but it's not ultimate.

Not only did God create our sexuality, He also directed it.

*“Haven't you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.” (Matthew 19:4-6)*

*Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. (Hebrews 13:4)*





“We believe God has designed marriage to be a covenantal relationship in the eyes of God and in the eyes of the law. It’s a sexual, procreative, lifelong union of one man and one woman (as husband and wife), and is meant to signify the covenant love between Christ and His bride, the Church.” [-BCC Member Statement of Faith](#)

Do you remember your parents having “the talk” with you? Though some here maybe didn’t have that blessing, though you remember giving it to your own kids. I don’t remember the first time I ate pizza, but I remember the time my dad gave me “the talk.”

Parents: Let me encourage you to initiate conversations about sex early. Addressing sex sometime during the pre-puberty elementary years is important. I don’t have any Bible verses to back up this timing. The decision to tell your kids early is not a command, but it is wise and strategic. Be bold so your child’s first ideas about sexuality are shaped by you, their parent, and not a Google search, the older kid on the playground, or a scandal that rocks your family or community.

When you do talk to them, be straightforward. Use accurate names for genitalia rather than slang. There’s no reason to be graphic. You don’t need awkward stick drawings, but you do need to tell your kids what goes where. Being specific clears up confusion when kids are older.

Sarah and I have found the *God’s Design for Sex* series by NavPress helpful in choosing appropriate language to use with our kids at each age.

#4 – Warn your kids against discontentment, excuse-making, and sin’s empty promises.

Here’s how we say it at Bible Center Church...

“God’s revealed will for all people is chastity outside of marriage and fidelity within marriage. As a wonderful gift from God,



sexual intimacy is to be expressed between a man and a woman within the commitment and love of a marital relationship. Therefore, we believe that any other form of sexual intimacy or activity is contrary to God's perfect gift and design for the marriage covenant." [-BCC Member Statement of Faith](#)

The three clearest passages in the NT on this issue are the following...

*Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error. Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. 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. (Romans 1:26-32)*

*Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality, or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)*

*We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for the sexually immoral, for those practicing homo-*



*sexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God. (1 Timothy 1:9-11)*

So, what about temptation and attraction? Has a person sinned if they feel attracted or tempted to sin, but not give into it? Not according to the Bible. In Corinthians 10:13, we see that all Christians face temptation—even daily. It's the curse of living in a broken body in a broken world. James 1:13-15 teaches that we all have lusts unique to us. For one Christian it might be heterosexual lust. For another Christian, it might be homosexual lust or SSA. Always remember: attraction is not the sin. Our reactions to our attractions are what become the sin.

The opposite of homosexuality is not heterosexuality. The opposite of homosexuality is holiness. Also, let us remember, that heterosexuality is not listed in the Bible as a fruit of the Spirit. Self-discipline and self-denial are, but not being straight. Therefore, God calls all believer, whether their temptations are gay or straight, to self-discipline and self-denial.

Warn your kids against discontentment, excuse-making, and sin's empty promises.

The short epistle of Jude warns against these things. Jude is a loving, spiritual father. He wants what is best for each member of God's church. He begins his letter with regret, saying that he'd wanted to write and encourage the beloved with good news about their shared salvation. But instead, he felt compelled to warn them to fight against false teaching (Jude 3). As parents, we must be willing to speak to our children in the same way. Even when it's awkward or difficult, our kids need warnings and encouragement to stand against the world's lies.

*For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for*



*immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.*  
(Jude 4)

Let's notice what Jude is condemning here. He's not condemning those who feel temptations to immorality. That's all of us. Actually, Jude ends his little letter with hope. He reminds those of us who are saved but experience temptation that there's coming a day that temptation will be no more!

So what's he warning against? Supposed "Christian" teachers who twist the Bible to find ways to justify sin. In studying this issue over the last couple years, I'm convinced this is where we are today. There are teachers who, in the name of Jesus, are twisting the Bible to call bad good and good bad. And I get it! None of us want to speak untruth. None of us want to hurt someone through false teaching. However, may we never twist the Bible to make it allow something that God doesn't allow.

Here are a few excuses popular today with helpful rebuttals...

- "Homosexuality is condemned in the OT, but allowed in the NT. Since Jesus fulfilled the OT; it's okay new NT" – Truth is mixed with error in this statement. Homosexuality *is* condemned in the OT; however, it's also condemned in the NT. I don't believe it's wise to use Leviticus 18 and 20 to disprove homosexuality, but there are things listed there that were forbidden in the OT but allowed in the NT, eating bacon for instance. However, as we saw in Romans 1, 1 Corinthians 6, and 1 Timothy 1, giving into homosexual temptation is still sin in the NT.
- "If Paul were alive today, he would affirm homosexuality under certain conditions" – On what basis? Those who make this claim say that the words for *homosexuality* in the NT only refer to male prostitution or the exploitation of young boys, as was common in the Roman era. Such a statement is not only Scripturally ill-informed, but also historically and purposefully deceiving. While gay marriage was by no means common in the ancient world, it did exist and almost everyone knew about



- it. In fact, the notorious emperor Nero, who ruled Rome at the time when Paul was writing, married other men on two separate occasions. As historian and queer studies pioneer Louis Crompton puts it, “Nowhere does Paul or any other Jewish writer of this period imply the least acceptance of same-sex relations under any circumstance. The idea that homosexuals might be redeemed by mutual devotion would have been wholly foreign to Paul or any other Jew or early Christian.”
- “If Jesus were alive today, he would affirm homosexuality under certain conditions” – On what basis? Jesus said in Matthew 15:19-20, “For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what defile a person.” Sexual immorality is from the Greek word, “*porneia*.” At the time of Jesus, *porneia* referred to any sexual behavior outside of marriage. It would have included premarital sex, prostitution, and same-sex behavior. Jesus is not sexually tolerant at all.
  - “Jesus accepts me for who I am. He doesn’t want me to change” – What?! God has every intention to change who we are. We are by nature children of wrath. We are born in sin and shaped in iniquity, and God has every intention to create us again, to make us new creatures. The Bible is all about change and conversion.

Let us never forget the deceiving argument that Satan used in the garden, “Did God really say?” (Genesis 3:1)

#5 – Show genuine care and empathy towards kids who persistently struggle, continually pointing them to Jesus.

I find it interesting that right after Paul mentions homosexual behavior in 1 Timothy 1:10, he says in verse 15, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” Paul doesn’t look down on people in gay relationships from a moral high ground. He says he is the worst sinner he knows, saved only to prove that someone so bad could be redeemed (1 Timothy 1:16).



Every time Paul writes about same-sex sexual sin, he reminds his readers that they are sinners too. In Romans 2, anyone who has read Paul's list of sins and come out feeling smug gets a slap in the face: "You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgement on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself" (Romans 2:1).

In this spirit, we say here at Bible Center Church...

"We believe all people are uniquely broken, and no person is beyond the hope of the gospel. We are committed to speaking the truth in love at all times, including when we discuss these issues. The grace of God in Christ is sufficient to forgive all sexual sins and to give every gospel-believer the power to make holy choices." [-BCC Member Statement of Faith](#)

What can you do if your kids are struggling in ways that you didn't? Show genuine care and empathy, continually pointing them to Jesus.

Let's face it. There's a lot of shame involved. There's understandable shame for a kid confessing same-sex attraction or transgender feelings, especially if that child has grown up around coarse gay jokes or politically charged opinions about the LGBTQ movement. It's understandable for a kid who grows up in that context to fear losing friendships if they allow their struggles to become public knowledge.

First, while taking your own shame to Jesus, seek to cultivate empathy instead. If we're honest, we know kids' fears about confessing disordered desires are not unfounded. Many parents don't react well. Some parents' first instincts are to run from the situation and ignore it. Some become overwhelmed emotionally and get angry, whether with God or with their child: "How can this be happening? You were raised better than this!" These kinds of responses only create more distance between parents and their children. Like the Pharisees, many Christian communities teach true doctrine all the while judging and marginalizing those who publicly



confess sin or adopt socially unacceptable identities (Luke 18:9–14). We must remember that those who experience gender confusion or same-sex attraction are not unique in battling brokenness or sinful desires.

If so, you're more like your child than you may have originally thought. When we acknowledge what we have in common and move toward kids who struggle rather than away from them, we reflect the kind of love with which Jesus loved us (1 John 4:19).

Second, acknowledge the courage it took to be honest. Even if your child's confession is hard to hear, thank them for being honest enough to tell you the truth. Acknowledge how hard it must have been for your child to speak this secret and get it out in the open. Thank them for trusting you, reaffirm your love for them, and assure them that your relationship will not end because of this confession. Affirming your love for your child and expressing gratitude for their truthfulness will help you cultivate an ongoing relationship that is built on authenticity.

Furthermore, listen before you speak or act. If your child began the conversation, respect their initiative by allowing the dialogue to be about what you can learn from them and not what you feel they need to hear from you.

Fourth, validate your child's suffering. Kids who struggle with gender confusion or same-sex attraction may have heard many times from the church that homosexuality is wrong. But rarely have we acknowledged their unique form of suffering and intense temptations. Students who experience same-sex attraction "often contend with intense loneliness, confusion, fear, and even despair as they wrestle with something that seems as if it's an essential part of who they are." The same is true for kids who experience gender dysphoria.

Fifth, pray for your child. We can educate our children as much as we want, have conversations, and teach them the biblical point of view. But in the end, their hearts must be in submission to God or



these words will fall on deaf ears. A child's repentance ultimately depends on the Holy Spirit's work in their heart and not on a parent's actions.

Finally, keep pointing your child to Jesus. He's the only perfect human. All men and woman are broken, but not Jesus. He was/is the sexually pure human. He lived a sinless life, and died on the cross for all our sins. He rose again to save us and transform us!

### ***Why do these five things? Because...***

God designed the Christian home to be a haven where our kids can learn about sexual identity.