



I suppose children have always needed clear, biblical guidance on sex and sexuality, but it also seems that today's challenges – abundant and accessible pornography, new societal norms regarding gender, the widespread celebration of homosexuality, and so much more – require parents to be especially proactive. I'm thankful for *Not If, But When* and its simple, appropriate, and Bible-based lessons on the purpose and the power, the blessings and the boundaries, of God's gift of sexuality.

Tim Challies
Blogger at www.challies.com

How did you learn about sex? For all the wonderful things my parents did for me, I never had 'the talk' with either of them. I cobbled together ideas from friends, TV, books, and pornography I had seen as an adolescent. When I speak on sexuality and relationships around the country, I often ask the audience to raise their hands if, as youth, they had a helpful, ongoing discipleship conversation regarding sexuality with a parent or mentor. The answer is pretty much the same: about 5% or less! *Not If, But When* is an excellent resource to change that percentage in the right direction. With biblical clarity, gentleness and easy-to-follow examples, John Perritt's new book will help parents and caregivers grow in wisdom and courage to disciple children in sexual faithfulness.

Ellen Mary Dykas
Women's Ministry Coordinator for Harvest USA
Author *Sexual Sanity for Women: Healing from Sexual and Relational Brokenness*,

It's a hard thing to admit or even to think about – but we live in a sexualised society where pornography is the norm. We want to protect our children but to ignore what is happening in the wider culture will not protect. Rather, our children need to be taught openly and in a culturally appropriate way what the Bible teaches. *Not If, But When* does just that. An excellent resource for parents to use.

David Robertson
Well-known Pastor and Apologist

Dedication

To some of God's greatest treasures in my life – Sarah, Samuel, Jillian, Will, and Amber. Even though you are growing up in a world poisoned by sin, I pray you see the goodness and beauty of God's creation and grow to see him as your Creator, Redeemer, and Friend. I love you more than you love me!





Not If, But When

Preparing our children for
worldly images

John Perritt

Illustrated by
Alice Mastropaolo

Features Two
Story Options:
One for Girls
or Boys



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— Introduction for Parents —

When I decided to have “the talk” with my oldest child, I fixed a picnic lunch and, by God’s grace, it turned out to be a truly beautiful moment between father and daughter. I read some portions of Genesis, explained God’s glorious gift of sex and his creating male and female as sexual beings. I allowed her to ask questions which helped me steer the conversation in an age-appropriate way. While I’m sure some of my explanations were less than perfect, it seemed like a perfect time spent together and I was so thankful to God for that time I hope we’ll both remember for many years to come. Little did I know, however, just how thankful I would be.

Two months after this conversation I was in the living room with my wife enjoying some quiet conversation as our children played in the front yard. Our yard often became the hangout for all the neighborhood children. I would typically step outside on occasion to ensure everyone was playing nice – trying to strike a balance between the helicopter parent and the neglectful parent. Before I could step outside my daughter and her friend came in. Just as I sensed that something was wrong, my daughter said, “Dad, can we talk to you?”

My daughter and her friend told me that two boys down the street asked them to have sex with them. My daughter and the two boys she referenced were eight-years-old and the other girl was about six ... let that sink in. She went on to explain that they were saying some other sexual things – not her words – and they rode away on their bikes and came to talk to me.

Then my daughter said, “Part of me didn’t want to tell you this, but I knew I should.” I praised her for this decision and thanked God for moving in her heart to bring this information to me.

After I spoke with the girls, I tracked down the two boys. (Yes, they are both still alive today for those wondering.) God gave me firm but gracious words. One boy literally began to tear up and almost cried in front of me. It was that quivering lip and those glossy eyes that God used to give me this thought, It’s not this boy’s fault. It’s his parents.

I could be mistaken, but I assume this young boy did not know what sex was. He has probably heard the word and – if we’re going with statistics – seen pornographic images. But, hearing the word ‘sex’ in the school halls or seeing sexual images on Google are not sex.

God’s definition of sex is far deeper than any image on the Internet. It’s even beyond the understanding of any adult who’s been married for fifty years. God’s gift of sex is his glorious invention that’s shared between one man and one woman in the context of marriage and it points to his love for his church.

We may know what sex is, but we will never fully know the great depth God created it to be. This is what makes pornography such a tragedy.

What took place in my front yard that day was tragic. Two young girls were hurt and scared. It’s difficult for adults to comprehend the ways in which their young minds processed the sexual requests of these boys. But, it’s not only a tragedy for these young girls, it also is for these boys. Even though I tried to communicate

love and truth to them, I hardly have a relationship with them. I could only do so much. Without God's intervention, they will continue down a path of sexual perversion and hurt others in the process.

I hope I'm wrong and maybe they have parents that are teaching them about biblical sexuality. But, this book is written for them. It's written for the two little girls who came walking in my living room that day. It's written for parents who know that it's not a matter of *if my child will be exposed to pornography, but when will they be exposed.*

Pornography is wreaking havoc in our culture. After serving in youth ministry for well over a decade, I've seen students, families, and marriages destroyed over this issue. I've had parents and students in my office in tears over this issue. And I'm convinced that one of the greatest tools the enemy has used when it comes to pornography has been this: silence.

Too many parents have been embarrassed or felt ill-equipped to deal with this subject, so they don't talk about it at all. They remain silent on the matter.

Sadly, some of the silence from the parents has been due to the fact that they have secret porn addictions themselves. Other parents mistakenly think that remaining silent about it will protect their children from it. While there are numerous reasons parents don't talk about this issue, let's consider one way to fight against the pervasive influence of pornography in our culture.

As you've probably guessed, if silence has been a weapon pornography has employed, then conversation is an ally in our fight. But, I'm not simply talking about passing on a knowledge about pornography and its devastating effects, which can be helpful. I'm talking about passing on the truth of God's Word to our children. That's where this book comes in.

The book you hold in your hand is meant to be read alongside your child. It is pitched at 7–12-year-olds. While some of you may protest that seven is too young, please be reminded that the average age of porn exposure is now eight-years-old. Plus, wouldn't you want your children to be exposed to the truth of God's Word about sex before they hear lies from the world?

It is my hope and prayer that God uses this resource to protect many young minds from a life of pornography. That God uses this resource to spare future marriages the affliction brought from pornography. And, while we can be confident that God does use his Word to transform lives, we must be in prayer. This resource is not a guarantee that your life and the life of your children will be free of pornography abuse. That said, it is a mighty tool I hope the Lord is pleased to use in our fight against this issue.

Introduction

To be Read with Child

One of the greatest gifts God gives to parents are children – they are treasures! The truth is, however, our children don't belong to us but to God. Since God creates everything, it all belongs to him – even children. Therefore, part of a parent's job is to take care of the children God gifts to them.

One of the jobs I have as your parent is to take care of you. Not only do I try and take care of your physical needs – like food, shelter, and clothing, but, I also try and take care of your spiritual needs – like praying for you and reading the Bible with you. This little workbook is part of how I'm trying to faithfully parent you to be a godly person in a sinful world.

Something I want to teach you about is God's good gift of sex and how our sinful world affects it. In Genesis 1:26–28 we read:

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’”

There is so much that could be said about these verses. One thing these verses discuss is God's design of sex. When God is telling Adam and Eve to be “fruitful and multiply and fill the earth ...” he's talking about sex. To be sure, he's talking about more than sex, but he is telling Adam and Eve to do something he created them to do. They are to have sex and by doing this they will be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth.

The most important thing I want you to hear from me is that God created sex and it is a good thing. He actually created it and it was a part of life before sin even entered the world.

Sadly, sin enters the world in chapter 3 of Genesis. After that, sin poisoned everything. The world is still good and contains God's amazing fingerprints all over it, but sin has also impacted every square inch – even sex.

What this workbook discusses is one specific way that sex has been poisoned by sin. There is something called “pornography” and it is just one way we see sin ruining something God created as good. Pornography is a dangerous thing and it hurts you and other people. Not only do I want to teach you about this to protect you, but I also want to teach you about this so you can understand God's good creation.

Even though I cannot protect you from all the evils of this world, I can pass the knowledge of God's Word on to you and equip you for life in a broken world. The Bible tells us that it is the Sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17). God uses it in our lives as a weapon against evil. In order for me to be a faithful parent, I want to equip you with the truth of God's Word in the midst of a world that lies to you. Pornography is a lie that will hurt you, so let's read the truth of God's Word to fight it.

(For the boy's story, turn to page 35)



Not If, But When

The Girl's Story

1. One of God's Greatest Gifts

"How was the waterpark?" Nancy asked. Sarah and her friends had been anticipating this trip for the past month. Not only would it be a fun place to visit, but it marked the end of school as well.

"Oh Mom! It was such fun," Sarah replied. "Everyone was able to make it and the weather was perfect. Plus, there was no school."

Laughing, her mother said, "I'm glad you had fun, but remember, school isn't to punish children. It helps you steward the brain God has given you." This was a phrase that had become very familiar to Sarah.

"Hey Mom," Sarah said somberly. "You know how you said we can always talk to you about anything?"

"Of course you can sweetie," Nancy replied. Nancy sensed a concern in Sarah's tone.

"Well, my friends were talking about this boy at the waterpark. They said he looked cute and one of my friends said he had a good body. They also said something about sex."

"Thank you for telling me that," said Nancy. "Do you remember exactly what they said about sex?"

"Nothing much. They just used the word. I don't even think they knew what it meant."

"Honey, I'm so glad you're coming to me with this and not to someone else. You're showing a lot of wisdom to talk with someone older about something as important as sex. To be honest, I should have talked to you about this sooner, so please forgive Mommy for not doing that. Do you remember how the Bible begins?"

"Yes," said Sarah, "it tells us that God made all things. And that he created men and women 'after his own image'."

"That's right," said Nancy, "and, if you remember, God also tells humans to be 'fruitful and multiply' and 'to fill the earth'. What do you think God's talking about there?"

Sarah, looking down at the floor, replied, "Is God telling them to make babies?"

Nancy said, "That's part of what he's telling them. You see, when we read Genesis we read that God made everything. But, it doesn't specifically say that God created sex. Even though it doesn't use the word 'sex' in Genesis, that is some of what is meant by 'fill the earth and multiply'. God wants men and women to have sex in the proper context."

Thinking a bit about what her mother said, "So sex is how babies are made?"

"That's right," said Nancy. "You know how Mommy and Daddy tell you that you are an amazing gift to us? Well, sex is also an amazing gift. God made it and gave it to us and it is just one of the ways that tells us what a gracious and loving God we have."

Sarah replied, "So, when sex is a good thing, why did I feel like we were talking about something bad at the waterpark?"

"That's a great question, sweetie. Let's go on the back deck and talk about this some more."



Read:

Genesis 1:1, 26-28

Main Point:

God made all things, even something called sex.

What did you learn?

(Allow your child to answer in their own words.) God made all things and this includes sex. Sex is a good thing – a gift – God has given to his children.





Not If, But When
The Boy's Story

4. Distorting the Gift

“Hey Dad.” As those words came out of Samuel’s mouth, Hardie sensed a tone of guilt. “Something else happened at the waterpark. When we were finishing up for the day, Danny showed me some pictures he had on his phone. They were pictures of girls and a few of them were naked.”

“I am so sorry you saw that.”

“You told me I could talk to you about anything, so I wanted to tell you about this.”

Hardie leaned forward and patted Samuel on the knee. “I’m so happy you told me. You did the right thing. Samuel, those pictures are something we call pornography. Pornography is pictures of people that are either naked or barely clothed.”

“Dad, I knew I shouldn’t be looking at them and I didn’t look at them long, but I was caught off guard when Danny showed them too me. I felt like it would be weird if I didn’t look or he’d make fun of me if I told him to put the phone down. I didn’t know what to do, so I just acted like I liked them, but there was part of me that did like them.”

“I completely understand,” said Hardie. “This is part of why it is so important for us to talk about sex. Sadly, we live in a sinful world and humans have taken God’s good gift of sex and distorted it in many ways. Pornography is just one way sinful humans distort the gift of sex.”

“Dad, why are my friends looking at pornography?”

Hardie paused to think a minute before he responded. “Well, if you think about what we’ve discussed, it makes sense. God created all of us to be sexual creatures, but those desires are to occur in the proper context. Pornography steals parts of God’s gift and uses it in inappropriate and evil ways. So, in other words, your friends are enticed by pornography – in part – because they’re created as sexual beings and this is part of the reason you also liked what you saw. Does that make sense?”

“I think it does.”

Hardie explained it once more, “Even though pornography is taking sexual desires out of their context, it still contains aspects of God’s good gift of sex.”

“I get it,” said Samuel.

“And that’s what makes pornography so dangerous. It is using elements of God’s gift, but it’s twisting them in horrible ways. This is what Paul meant when he talked about sexual immorality. There are a lot of things that could be described as sexual immorality, pornography is one of them.”



Read:
Ephesians 5:1-3

Main Point:
Sin distorts God’s good gift of sex.

What did you learn?
Pornography takes elements of God’s good gift and distorts them in wicked ways.









Read:
Genesis 1:26-28

Main Point:
God gives value to humans by creating them in his image, pornography devalues humans by objectifying them.

What did you learn?
Pornography attempts to turn people into objects and disrespects them. God created people as his image-bearers and gives them value because of that.

5. Worshiping the Gift

Hardie could tell that Samuel was pretty upset by what he had seen. He moved over near his son and patted his back. “Son, I know this was an upsetting thing for you and I’m so sorry you had to see those pictures. Part of the reason you are so upset is because of how God created us as humans. You see, he has created everyone – male and female, young and old, black or white – ‘**after his own image.**’ Therefore, every human reflects his glory and deserves respect. Pornography, however, disrespects people.”

“Dad, I know pornography is wrong by removing sex out of the context you talked about, but how does it disrespect people?”

“I don’t want to upset you, but I want to ask you a question about that picture you saw. Do you remember the girl’s face in the picture?” asked Hardie.

“It didn’t show her face, Dad.”

“That’s what I thought. Often pornography doesn’t focus on the faces of the men or women in the pictures. Sometimes it does, but sometimes it doesn’t. What pornography does is focus on body parts. In a sense, it’s trying to just give us pictures of the sexual parts of people, without us seeing the person. The word for this is ‘objectifying.’ Pornography tells us to focus on people as objects for us to use how we want, instead of seeing them as people. This goes

against the way God created us.”

“I understand. God made all of us to reflect his image,” said Samuel, “but pornography tries to get us to focus on different parts of people, which ... objectifies them and disrespects them?”

“That’s right. Once again, it’s taking sex out of the context God created it for. It’s taking sex out of the context of marriage and tries to give it to people in a way that’s inappropriate. Pornography tricks people into thinking they can take God’s gift and use it in another way, but they only end up hurting themselves when they do that. Remember, sex was created to bind a man and a woman together in a loving way. Pornography removes the loving relationship of our sexuality and focuses on sexual parts.”

“Now that I think about it,” said Samuel, “when Danny was showing us the pictures he had on his phone, all of the other guys around were just talking about the body parts. They weren’t talking about that girl as a person.”

“Yes, and this goes against the way God created humans. Again, people are God’s image-bearers and that means they deserve respect, but pornography attempts to take that away from people. Pornography disrespects people.”

“I see. I felt bad after seeing those pictures and I see how pornography disrespects people ... but, why did my friends enjoy it?”

“That’s an important question,” said Hardie.





“Yes, it is, Samuel. And, there’s more to that. God is an amazing Creator and he actually created our brains to release certain chemicals when men and women have sex.² One chemical is called ‘dopamine.’ Have you ever heard of that?” Samuel shook his head.

“Dopamine is a chemical that’s released in the brain when someone views pornography. This chemical makes our brain desire more and more pornography. What happens, over time, is that the brain releases less dopamine, so people have to look at more pornography to get the same feeling they once had. This is why many people, including myself, believe that pornography is addictive. Do you know what that means?”

“Well, I know you’ve talked about being addicted to coffee.”

With a big smile, Hardie said, “That’s right, I have said that. While drinking coffee isn’t necessarily sinful, I have to drink it every day or I’d have a headache. Part of the reason for this is an addiction, which means I feel like I have to have it every day. Well, it’s similar with pornography. Some people look at it so much, they feel like they have to have it every day. Like I said, it’s a powerful thing. Again, this is why God gives us rules with his gift of sex. He does it to protect us because he knows we’ll end up hurting ourselves if we misuse his gift.”

“I understand,” said Samuel. “God is a loving Father and he puts boundaries in place to protect us.”

Read:

1 Corinthians 6:18-20

Main Point:

By the power of the Spirit we are to flee sexual immorality. If we indulge in things, like pornography, it will hurt us and others.

What did you learn?

Pornography is a powerful danger that can be addictive. It releases chemicals in the brain that make us keep coming back.



