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AWKWARD

bringing parents confidence
for conversations about sex

AWKWARD

an introduction



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Welcome to some of the most awkward conversations you'll ever have.

I get it. I really do.

I have six sons, and even still, the thought of those first official conversation about sex with them makes my throat tighten a little and my pulse quicken. My mind races, "What if they look at me differently?" or "What if they are too young to understand this?", or perhaps even worse, "What if they already know about it?"

I still get awkward at times, but the reality is that my husband and I have been talking to them about matters of sexuality ever since they were very young. We have been gently painting the big picture about God-honouring, healthy sexuality and relationships ever since they were infants and toddlers. It's just that they haven't always known it.

In this book, we are going to unpack some of the foundational Biblical truths that can get conversation started long before they ever officially ask, "But how does the baby get INSIDE the mommy's tummy?" There is also a ton of conversation to continue having through pre-teen and teen years. It's not about packing it all into one or two big talks, but about being connected to our kids, and being ready and open to keep talking and to keep answering questions.

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Maybe no one ever had these types of vulnerable conversations with you and you gained all your insights from the locker room, from biology class, or from pop culture. For most people, that lack of guidance has led to a bunch of fumbling, confusion and pain. I pray that the truths in this book will not only be a source of insight for your children's sake, but will also be a source of healing for your heart. I am confident that when you bravely face the past, in all of its awkwardness, healing can and will occur. When that happens, you have created an invaluable inheritance for your kids. It will become of treasury of the soul that can be passed down to coming generations.

Finally, please hear my cheering voice through it all, encouraging you EVERY step of the way. Because you have cracked a book like this, I know that your intention is to help your kids cross through the currents of culture with their heads above water.

Fear tells you to keep your mouth shut. It says that you're going to mess things up, but I know that you are the courageous ones who will break the silence and establish a foundation of confidence for your sons and daughters.

Your child's future is worth every awkward moment of conversation.

AWKWARD

chapter 1



the big picture

chapter 1

the big picture

In parenting there are plenty of moments when “because I said so” may have to suffice for a little while, but honestly, I think that our Heavenly Father wants to give us a far greater explanation than “because I said so,” when it comes to the intersection of our sexual morality and our faith.

If we are going to have any hope of transferring our values around sexuality to our kids through intentional conversation and home culture, this has to go further than a list of “do’s” and “don’ts”. We have to understand the “why” for ourselves too.

The big picture about sexuality begins with understanding the big picture of an ongoing war from darkness against humanity, as we see laid out for us in the first book of the Bible, Genesis. This may feel like we’re jumping into the deep end of things, but without this framework, I think we are left with an unanswered, “WHY?”

In Genesis, chapters 1 and 2, we learn that God delighted in creating male and female in His image, and He blessed them to enjoy a paradise together. Yes, to work hard, but also to enjoy all that had been created, including sexual expression that they could experience - for companionship, for multi-dimensional intimacy, and for the addition of children. The Bible explicitly explains that they were naked, but not ashamed.

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A cruel enemy, Satan, soon targeted them because he despised the image of God in them, and through psychological questioning and manipulation, got Eve to question the goodness of her heavenly Father. She ate the one type of fruit that God had commanded them not to eat, and passed it to her husband to eat also.

Sin entered the earth, they felt ashamed of their own vulnerable nakedness, so they ran to hide. Like a good Father, God seeks them out, and speaks honestly with them about the consequences of their deliberate rebellion against God's boundary, but the first curse comes to that deceptive enemy.

Genesis 3:15 in the Message paraphrase says it this way:

"I'm declaring war between you and the Woman, between your offspring and hers. He'll wound your head, you'll wound his heel."

I want you to see that this is a prophetic declaration about Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, the offspring or seed of the woman, who dealt a death blow to the head of our enemy when He was crucified and resurrected. But, I also want you to see that this is a declaration of the inevitable battle between the enemy and our children. Darkness is targeting our children. Our spiritual enemy hates our children, but also fears our children. Remember that every child carries the image of God here on earth, and also, when our children are born again and empowered by the Spirit of God, they have the authority to destroy the works of darkness as they follow the ways of Jesus.

The enemy's tactics are directed at destroying the "seed of the woman", and ultimately, in something that the Bible calls "the shedding of innocent blood."

Stay with me here, because this gets real, real fast, but I'm hoping you will see the landscape of our culture more clearly after this.

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Countless times in Scripture, we read that the shedding of innocent blood releases a curse on the nations. We see it in God's response to Cain after he murders his brother, Abel. We see it in God's judgment of nations who were routinely worshiping false gods through child sacrifice. We see it in the narrative surrounding death threats on Jeremiah. We even see it when Judas Iscariot tries to return the "blood money" that the high priests had given him to betray Jesus, an innocent man.

Do you remember the Biblical records of two massacres of the innocent?. The first was when Pharaoh mandated that all babies be put to death in the book of Exodus. At this time Moses was miraculously saved by a brave mother, and rose to be a great deliverer for the enslaved Israelites.

The second time was at the birth of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospel of Luke, when King Herod again declared that all boys under two years of age must be slaughtered. Mary and Joseph escaped with Jesus, and He rose to be the ultimate Deliver for all.

We are living now in the era of a hidden massacre of children, where hundreds of thousands of unborn babies are being killed due to a woman's "right" to abortion. When we consider that abortion is simply at the end of a conveyor belt in a system that elevates sexual expression above nearly all else, and scorns any limitation, boundary or consequence, then we start to see how this all fits together.

Simultaneously, millions of children around the globe are being targeted as trafficked victims, many into the sex industry. It makes me wonder if this might be a generation of young men and women who are going to rise up in the authority of Jesus and bring deliverance to the nations.

There is a war from hell against our children, but the Spirit of God is

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here to empower and guide us, as courageous guardians, so that we can zoom right back into our everyday life and begin to lay a foundation of understanding in our children's lives. The enemy is overplaying his hand, and moms and dads are now waking up to the battle, and getting tenacious about equipping their kids.

In the midst of deep darkness on the earth, we must remember that our dear Savior laid down His life, and in the shedding of his innocent blood, once and for all He broke the power of sin and death, for all who would believe and enter into that covenant of life with Him. He is Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. The scars on His resurrected body are the evidence of His ultimate victory, and through Him, glory will rise on us, His children. And in the time to come, all the remaining battles will finally cease, and darkness will be no more. So, when it comes to having conversations about sexuality with our children, the very first thing that we must know is that God is good, and that He wants good for us all. And He was willing to die for us in order to bring life to us again.

And when you feel overwhelmed by all the awkward, difficult, complicated conversations that you know your kids need to have with a trustworthy source, I want you to lean in, and remember, if you are a follower of Jesus, the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead is at work inside of YOU. And He gives wisdom to all who ask for it. And He loves your kids even more than you do. He gave His life for them.

Learning to Look Both Ways

I was standing with my mom at the edge of a busy street, waiting for the signal to change so that we could step onto the crosswalk. I must have been around 7 years old, because I can remember roughly how tall I was standing beside my mom's left leg. Warm day. It was the crossing

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of Marshall and McCallum Road in the city of Abbotsford, British Columbia.

As the light changed my mom instinctively reached for my hand. For the first time ever, I pulled my hand out of hers. She looked down at me with surprise in her eyes, but she didn't say anything. We stepped out together, my little legs hurrying to match her pace. We made it across safely.

That day, she wordlessly allowed me to transition to a new stage of childhood and I have never forgotten it.

We had walked across roads together for years. She and my dad had guided me consistently, always reminding me, "Look both ways", "Don't run out", "Don't stand too close to the edge". The time eventually came, years later, when my older sister and I would venture out, walking down to the 7-11 for some Slurpees and sour candies. We had their voices to guide us even when they weren't with us.

In our culture today, we stand at the edge of a busy highway, holding the hands of our young children, wondering how they will ever navigate through matters of sexuality and relationships. There are so many things to think about and the last thing we want is for our kids to run out into traffic and be impacted by negative sexual encounters.

The Bible describes the way through the chaos of temptation and immorality, a crosswalk from the naivety of childhood into the maturity of adulthood. We get to hold our child's hand for a season, and our voice will guide them later when they face the journey without us. We must teach them to look both ways.

Look to the past

Every generation has the benefit of history to learn from, if they are wise enough to do so. We can look into Biblical history, as well as the trends and cultures throughout the centuries and of the last 50 years. Even your own past, however painful it was or marred it may look, can be used to instruct your children of the pathway to life.

There are details in the following paragraphs that are gruesome and hard to think about, but I believe that we as parents must learn to see the gravity of the situation matched with the confidence in the majesty of the Lord's kingdom and His ways.

This information is for you to know and guard over so that your children's innocence is not forfeited by premature exposure. As parents, our goal is to take this intense information and break it into language that can be a foundation of understanding for our children about God's kind intentions.

A Biblical Perspective

In the Old Testament, we see that the Israelites were always surrounded by nations that had a cultural norm of sexual promiscuity. When God brought His people out of Egypt in the book of Exodus, He didn't dodge the topic, but rather gave clear instructions. "Don't mess around with the customs and worship patterns of the neighbouring people groups. Don't make excuses or allow those root structures to infiltrate your families."

The false god systems around them allowed, celebrated and even demanded worship in the forms of fornication, adultery, orgies, mutilation, gender fluidity and pedophilia. To deal with the inevitable pregnancies and births of children who would need to be cared for in a chaotic relating system like this, these false gods also welcomed and

demanded child sacrifice or infant abandonment. At the bronze altars, babies were burned, with drums beating to drown out their cries. These sacrifices were believed to secure a season of fertility in herds, protection from enemy armies, and an abundance of crops.

When you read through the Old Testament, it could seem like the God of heaven, the deity of the Israelites, seemed to be the strictest parent in the neighbourhood, giving firm boundaries for us. He says it clearly, and repeatedly, "Sexual relationship only with your covenant partner. One man, one woman. And your children are treasures, not to be abandoned or destroyed."

Our God knows that sex is a powerful thing - as powerful as fire or a wild river. By setting boundaries, He was establishing the fireplace or the river banks that could contain such a force and even release the blessing of that power of sexuality. Without those boundaries, the flames will scar us and the waters will drown us.

The Lord also knows the impact and legacy within a family unit; to bless your children is to strengthen your family and invest into the entire nation.

In the New Testament, the early church was launched into a culture similar to what we experience now. The cities of Corinth, Ephesus and Rome were epicentres of polytheistic false god worship. Temples were dedicated to a myriad of gods and goddesses, and not surprisingly, humanity again elevated the sexual experience above all others. Once more, the resulting babies were often the ones to pay the real price, facing abandonment and death. It was a repeat of all the same elements, just with different geographical locations and different names attached to the idols.

The Bible shows us that these false gods and idols were not just ideas made up by men, but were actually demonically-inspired concepts that

took advantage of the weakness of mankind's tendency to selfishness. (For instance Psalm 106:34-39)

Just as God gave instruction to sustain foundations of civilization, the enemy's goal is to deceive and lead people into a lifestyle that will cripple individuals, families, and ultimately entire nations.

A Look at History

As a 21-year old, I was preparing for an upcoming missions trip to Peru and decided to study their history and religion. I was astonished to find the presence of sexual immorality and sacrifice of children hidden in plain view in the history of the infamous Machu Picchu. I remember being haunted by the details of how the most beautiful of the little girls and boys would be selected and taken from their families and offered. In this last decade since that Peruvian history lesson, I have found this repeated pattern over and over again internationally as I've scratched the surface.

We may shake our heads in bewilderment at what past generations have done or possibly be callous to the thought that those were REAL children and REAL men and women engaged in those heart-wrenching practices, but do we have eyes to see what our own culture looks like? Can we honestly say that our culture today is much different? Recent events and studies are revealing how many children are caught in sex-trafficking, and for the creation of child pornography. Isn't there the same disregard for the younger generation, to the point where the most vulnerable among us are in danger of death in the form of abortion?

Just as God provided a roadmap for His people as recorded in the Old and New Testaments, so He now also offers us the same wisdom, help and guidance as we raise our children. Yes, there is darkness in our era of history, but there is also a lavish amount of grace available to us. God is still looking all over the earth and sees those whose hearts are

fixed on Him. He is as committed as ever to show Himself strong on our behalf and on behalf of our children.

When it Hits Close to Home

Looking into the ancient past may not be nearly as challenging as looking into the mirror and realizing that you yourself were once a victim to these same mindsets. Our personal sexual history can come with deep pain attached.

Memories flood our minds when we smell a certain scent of cologne or perfume. When we drive past certain streets or buildings, or hear the chorus of a song, suddenly we are transported back in time to the encounter or relationship that caused us confusion and pain. Dreams may haunt you. Phrases or words said a decade ago may still pierce you. Images may rush at you when you try to fall asleep at night or when you try to be intimate with your spouse.

The first thing I'd like to tell you is that you are absolutely not alone. The second thing is that there is hope for you to be absolutely free from your past and for those memories to no longer have a death grip on you.

Jesus truly is the Great Physician who came to earth to bring good news to the afflicted, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty for captives, to comfort all who mourn, and to give gladness instead of mourning (Isaiah 61:1-3, NIV). Right now, feel free to take a moment and simply welcome the Lord to begin and continue that healing work in your life. Ask Him to show you what the first step is that you need to take towards freedom.

The incredible thing is that this chapter of Isaiah 61 goes on to promise that these very ones who were once addicted, tormented, trapped, and

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broken-hearted would become the builders and repairers of the devastation within culture. No one is excluded. Through Jesus, your past does not have to disqualify your future.

Some early years in my dad's life was one that included heart-ache, sinful choices, and sexual shame in the years before he came to Christ. I remember a couple occasions when he would awkwardly stumble through parts of his story. I don't even remember all he said, but I do remember feeling grateful that he was willing to be vulnerable before us.

He broke through the sound barrier in the hopes of protecting his daughters. I believe that his humility coupled with his investment of time and attention over the years as a dad became the shield that guarded me from having to learn those same lessons the hard way. It is now an inheritance that I will pass down to my children.

I am confident that you are the brave parent who is willing to look at your own past and trudge out of that thick mud called Shame and say, "For the sake of the next generation, I will go through what I have to go through and become who I need to become."

Your freedom will fill your home's atmosphere.

Looking to the Future

It is a foolish thing to only aim for pleasure or comfort in the present. The wise ones look to the future and consider carefully how to build. Just as a wise home-builder will consider the end goal first and work from there, so we as humans must consider the life that we'd like to build. The Holy Spirit is the promised gift from heaven who will come be with us, counsel us when we don't know what to do, and empower us to make hard choices.

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One challenge that I face is ensuring that my motivation in parenting is love for my children and not fear of their failures. As soon as I feel afraid, my tendency is to micro-manage their choices, but when I take a posture of hope then I can show them the joyful way to walk.

For instance, two different people may be setting aside 5% of their income every month, putting it into a savings account. From the external activity, we could celebrate them both as wise, but the truth may be that one of them is hopeful, filled with vision for the future, while the other person is tortured by fear of lack and economic disaster. They are making the same choices, but one of them feels free and the other feels like a slave. Over time, as you interact with them, you would be able to discern the atmosphere around them.

So, we can choose to look to the future, influenced by the promises of God spoken to us in Scripture and whispered to us by the voice of the Holy Spirit. We cling to this hope in the face of difficult circumstances and learn to make a bold declaration over our children that the safest place for them is in the hands of the Lord.

We must cement ourselves in the belief that He loves them more than we do, and that He is eager to extend the resources of heaven into their lives. When we hear the whisperings of darkness that threatens the demise of our children, we must shout back the promises of God for their lives.

One of my favorites is found in Isaiah 54:13-14 (NKJV),

“All your children will be taught of the Lord, and great will be the peace of your children. In righteousness you will be established. You will be far from oppression, for you will not fear, and from terror for it will not come near you.”

We have been assigned a position of guardianship of the next generation. This isn't just about food, clothing, and getting them a basic education. This is about their destiny as men and women. It's time to rise up, parents. We must not avoid conversations with our children because we are afraid, but rather, we need to get involved because we have a vision for the future and recognize that the young ones are looking to us for guidance.

Onward with Hope

Our family likes to have breakfast for dinner, and many nights over the years we have served pancakes to our five sons. We always seemed to forget how much time it would take to cut up all of those big pancakes into bite-sized pieces. Up until a few years ago, we were the only ones with enough dexterity to master the sawing motion of a fork and knife. (Have you ever seen a three-year-old boy try to cut pancakes?) We would just finish cutting the last plateful when the first guy would be ready for his next pancake! Breakfast for dinner was not as fun as it is now.

Just like at the dinner table, we as parents have the responsibility to cut the big chunks of information and Biblical revelation into bite-sizes for our children. We must do the challenging and sometimes tedious work now, so that later when our children are on the edge of puberty, we are not introducing brand new recipes or food groups. They will “recognize the recipe” and be comfortable with the language we are speaking.

In these last pages, I hope that you have been introduced to a whole new way of seeing how matters of sexuality and faith intersect. I also pray that you are energized to learn more, and to lean into the conversations with your children about it all.

It may be awkward, but I guarantee that it will be worthwhile.



This first chapter of "Awkward" is an accompaniment to bring deeper insights regarding the big picture themes presented in the Awkward Video Series. The full manuscript has not yet been released.

Further resources are in development to help parents take these "big picture" themes and break it down into small concepts for children to understand.

Follow along with The Union Movement to get access to these resources as they become available.



About the Author

Bonnie Pue and her husband, Bryan, have been married since 2007 and live with their 6 sons in western B.C., Canada. She loves hiking on nearby trails, getting absorbed in a good book, or laughing around the dinner table with friends and family.



About The Union Movement

Bonnie and Bryan founded The Union Movement to help people find wholeness in the areas of identity, sexuality, and relationships. They bring a gospel-centred approach, encouraging churches and leaders to serve their community for holistic, long-lasting sexual health.

You can find more from them on IG @theunionmovement and their website: www.theunionmovement.com