

SEXUALITY

A Parent's Guide to

MASTURBATION

axis

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“Masturbation is part of my evening routine: call mom, brush my teeth, masturbate, and then fall asleep.”

—[Female, age 25](#)

A Parent's Guide to **MASTURBATION**

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This feels awkward, right?

This Parent Guide may shock you. Actually, we hope it does. Not because we're trying to be crude or gross, but because we believe that Gen Z needs your honesty more than you know. We hope that our bluntness inspires you to meet your kids with a willingness to be open and direct for their sakes.

If we're not willing to speak the awkward thing first, how can we ever expect our teens to bring their honest questions to us? Dr. Juli Slattery [explains](#) what is at stake when we talk about any aspect of human sexuality:

If we neglect these conversations, if we get squeamish, if we get judgmental, if we get legalistic instead of entering into people's real questions and pain on this issue, what we need to realize is we're not just abdicating the topic of sexuality, we're abdicating the opportunity to share who God is and where God meets us in the middle of our pain.

Talking openly with your teens isn't a guarantee that they will bring every question to you, but remaining silent is a guarantee that they will look for answers elsewhere.

Are your teens turning to Google instead of to you when they have an embarrassing question? And why is that? Aren't you a safer, infinitely wiser source of information? So how can you be like Google?

Before jumping into the rest of this Guide, we want to recognize that this is a highly controversial topic. Rather than attempting to settle the controversy around the morality of masturbation, this Guide looks at why it's so important to talk about masturbation. Approaching this topic prayerfully and asking for the Holy Spirit's guidance as we discern how we are to behave as embodied people, we believe the Lord will show us His way.

Do I have to talk about this?

They sat on their front porch soaking up the sun. Everything seemed so normal: Birds were chirping, the puppy was stretched out on the grass. But her mind was racing, "Does she really need to know this about me? I feel so disgusting. She's going to think I'm a total freak."

Deep inhale, "Mom, I need to tell you something." She then rushed headlong into a tearful confession of the compulsive masturbation she had been fighting against for

years.

“Is she angry? Gosh, she must be so disappointed. I’m so gross. Why did I decide to tell her about this?”

In reality, the girl’s mom looked pretty startled (who wants to talk about masturbation with their daughter on a Saturday afternoon?) and then she said something that sent her daughter’s fears tumbling to the ground: “Honey, I haven’t done a lot of research, but the Bible doesn’t say much about masturbation...I’m not sure that it’s wrong.” The girl was floored. Her mom wasn’t sure if masturbation was sinful? What?!

We tell you this woman’s testimony not to make a point about the morality of self-pleasure, but to give you a glimpse into the deep, unshakable shame that she carried for many years because no adult in her life was brave enough to talk openly about sex in general or masturbation specifically.

You may be hoping that a conversation about masturbation never has to happen with your kids. *Really? Talk openly and honestly with my child about self-stimulation to bring about orgasm? Yikes, yikes, yikes.* Every fiber of our beings would rather avoid this topic altogether. But silence on our part leaves a void in the next generations’ lives that will force them to look elsewhere for answers. Teens will not just “figure it out.” They will turn to Cosmopolitan magazine, YouTube, and their friends. Those sources are not only inadequate, but quite probably damaging.

But won’t that rob my kids of their innocence?

According to [Merriam Webster](#), innocence is “freedom from guilt or sin through being unacquainted with evil.” If knowing about the sexual function of the human body is evil, then yes, talking with our kids about masturbation is stealing their innocence. If knowledge about sex is wrong, any curiosity about sex and possibly even human anatomy is sinful.

Yet God called His design of our bodies good, including our ability to experience sexual pleasure. If He wasn’t afraid to make us with libidos, we shouldn’t be afraid to talk about them. If we believe that sex is good, then learning about it at developmentally appropriate stages is also good.

It’s common for young children ([before age 6](#)) to explore their bodies and discover that touching their genitals feels better than touching other places without even knowing what sex is! This isn’t a massive secret you’re exposing them to. Whether you talk about

self-pleasure or not, your kids will probably discover it for themselves and will most likely [have questions](#) about it. Questions like:

- Is masturbation normal?
- Do other girls/boys masturbate, or am I the only one?
- Can I masturbate too much?
- Can I hurt myself?
- Can I get an STI if I masturbate with an object or sex toy?
- Can it later hurt my chances of getting pregnant?
- Is there a “right way” to masturbate? What if I’m doing it wrong?
- Have I lost my virginity if I’ve masturbated?
- Is there something wrong with me if I don’t want to masturbate? Or if sex doesn’t really sound appealing?
- How do I stop once I’ve started the habit?
- Will masturbation decrease sexual performance when I’m sexually active?
- Is masturbation sinful?
- Is masturbation a healthy form of sexual release? Is it necessary?
- Is masturbation wrong if I’m not fantasizing or watching porn while doing it?
- Is it unhealthy to not masturbate?

If they turn to Google with their questions, here are some of the answers they can and will find (these are some of the top 10 search results for just the word “masturbation”):

- [50 of the Funniest Euphemisms for Masturbation](#)
- [How to Masturbate with a Penis: 12 Tips for Solo Play](#)
- [How to Masturbate: 12 Best Masturbation Tips for Female Orgasm](#)
- [Females and Masturbation—YouTube](#)
- [Why You Should Masturbate Whether You’ve Had Sex or Not—Teen Vogue](#)

Is this where we want our teen’s sexual discipleship to come from? Because these answers (that so easily lead to both soft- and hard-core pornography) are only a click away.

Masturbation feels like a shameful topic. Perhaps we imagine God leaving the room or looking the other way whenever we become aroused. In reality, God invented us with testosterone, estrogen, progesterone, oxytocin, and vasopressin so that we could be sexual. The way we talk about our bodies and their sexual functions is important because every part of our humanity is made in the image of God. If we can’t say “penis,” “vagina,” “orgasm,” “erection,” etc., we are communicating that those things are best kept hidden because they are dirty. Rather than stealing kids’ innocence, using correct anatomical terms builds a foundation of talking directly and unashamedly about the

way the human body works, and acknowledges that since these were all God's ideas first, in the correct context they are ultimately good!

Is masturbation really that common?

According to a 2019 [survey](#) (conducted by a sex toy manufacturer) of 13,000 people ages 18-74 from 18 countries, 84% of Americans have masturbated at least once (92% of men and 76% of women). The [average age](#) at which girls first masturbate is 13, with boys first masturbating at 12.4. [59% of Americans](#) believe that masturbation is a healthy and normal activity.

Why do people do it?

The [most common reasons](#) for masturbating are to “satisfy sexual urges,” “achieve sexual pleasure,” and “relax or relieve stress.” Self-stimulation resulting in orgasm [releases](#) dopamine (a pleasure chemical), oxytocin and prolactin (hormones that help us relax and sleep), and endorphins, which can help kill pain.

In a culture that values independence and self-sufficiency, self-pleasure makes a lot of sense. Demi Lovato and Clean Bandit sing about not needing an ex because they can “[do it solo](#).” This can be a form of self-protectionism that leads to isolation. Of course, power and control are attractive, but intimacy only comes through vulnerability. To enter into emotional, physical, and spiritual closeness with someone, we must give that person access to our full selves, including our flaws, wounds, and brokenness. Masturbation can feel powerful because it gives us a sense of self-sufficiency and allows us to avoid the helpless feelings of opening up to someone.

In addition, as Richard Beck ([author of *Unclean: Meditations on Purity, Hospitality, and Morality*](#)) [points out](#), masturbation is especially pertinent to singles, who live in an era where there is an increased delay of marriage in Western cultures. They begin puberty around age 11 (or younger), but most of them won't get married for at least another decade. How are they supposed to manage their sex drives from puberty to the wedding night?

Is it harmful?

Previous generations used [scare tactics](#) to keep people from masturbating—Don't touch yourself, you'll cause erectile dysfunction! You'll get hairy palms!—whereas the current cultural mantra promotes the [health benefits](#) of masturbation—“One of the few pleasurable things in life that we can do almost anytime and anywhere, as often as we want...There is no down side.” So what's actually true?

As far as contracting STIs, getting pregnant, or developing a misshapen penis, masturbation is about as safe as it gets. Of course any activity [has risks](#). Rough or continuous self-pleasure can cause skin irritation and even bleeding (especially if an object is used). For men, “masturbation [doesn't](#) have the health benefits that sex does.” And of course, studies have found that masturbation both [increases](#) and [decreases](#) the risk of prostate cancer (which goes to show that you can find a scientific study to support almost any argument).

As internet accountability ministry Covenant Eyes [points out](#), “Since the days of psychologists like Sigmund Freud and Alfred Kinsey, people picture the sexual impulse as if it's this boiling, tumultuous force that needs an outlet or it will explode in harmful ways.” But in reality, the body has a variety of natural outlets for pent up sexual tension, including sexual intercourse and [nocturnal emissions](#) (wet dreams). So masturbation isn't necessary, and one can be a healthy human without self-pleasuring.

Masturbation can be addictive, especially when used as a form of escapism or when paired with pornography ([this list](#) can help you gauge if a child's masturbation is compulsive).

One oft-overlooked “harm” of masturbation is guilt. A young woman shared with us that when she first orgasmed during masturbation she thought she had broken her body because she realized that the way she was stimulating herself was quite different than the act of penetrative sex. She thought she was training her body to respond in a completely abnormal way, and that if she ever got married she would disappoint her husband because she wouldn't be able to become aroused.

It wasn't the act of masturbation itself that caused her guilt, but rather a lack of knowledge that would help her understand what was happening to her body. No one had ever explained female anatomy to her. Knowing that she had a clitoris might've provided immense relief and could have made space for an honest discussion about how self-pleasure could train her body to only respond to certain types of stimulation, which could make intimacy in a future marriage difficult.

What does the Bible say about it?

There is no clear biblical command as to whether people should or shouldn't masturbate. [Some](#) would argue that masturbation is unhealthy and not God's best because sexual pleasure should be connected to the mutual giving of self to another person. By design, we long for [something more](#) than just physical release when we masturbate. We crave relational intimacy and connection because sex is ultimately about marriage as an expression of Christ's relationship with His bride, the Church. By nature, solo-sex cannot focus on anyone but ourselves and our personal needs.

Dr. Juli Slattery [writes](#):

Our sexuality was created to draw us into covenant love. Without sexual desire, very few people would ever go through the sacrifice required to commit your life to another person. We would be content with work, hobbies, and friendship. But our sexuality prompts us to think of romance, passion, intimacy, and belonging to another person.

So rather than viewing our sexual arousal as a beast to be managed and controlled, we should think of it as a drive toward binding ourselves in covenantal love to another person. Dr. Slattery continues:

One of the greatest dangers of masturbation (along with fantasy, hooking up, erotica, and pornography) is the belief that we can satisfy our sexual needs without pursuing covenant love.

According to her perspective, in the absence of a clear biblical command about masturbation, wisdom principles lead most people away from solo-sex.

An [alternative perspective](#) argues that the main issue isn't masturbation, it's lust. Natural physical urges (arousal) are not the same as the sinful objectification of another human's body. Can someone masturbate to the point of orgasm without lusting (which Jesus clearly prohibits)? Since that's a subjective question, each person must answer for themselves.

Pastor David Martin [shares](#) that the secrecy of his struggle with porn caused a fight-or-flight adrenaline response in his brain, which actually strengthened his addiction. He wonders if forbidding masturbation makes it more appealing and therefore addictive?:

If we forbid any and all masturbation, then we actually create the context where anytime a guy (or girl) masturbates, they are engaging in a forbidden act... which invariably triggers the adrenaline component. But if a young man simply finds release in the shower as an inconsequential and matter-of-fact part of his day—without engaging his mind in lustful thoughts—then it will not trigger

the adrenaline, nor will the experience be memorable or induce any sort of “attachment.”

This mindset shift could be quite helpful for someone in the midst of compulsive masturbation. Rather than telling him/herself that they’re never going to masturbate again, and then giving into temptation over and over, Martin would encourage them to shift their focus to avoiding lust, being thankful that their bodies are capable of experiencing pleasure, and moving on. Perhaps masturbation will lose some of its appeal if we treat it with less intensity. For some people, realizing that self-stimulation does not have to include lust [is incredibly freeing](#) and actually helps them avoid sin.

So according to [this view](#), masturbation is like a tool which can be used properly or improperly, for good or for sin. And what is sinful for one person may not be sinful for another.

How do I help my teen navigate through these perspectives?

We long for clear, straightforward answers. Perhaps this is why the Pharisees, a devout Jewish group, devised a complex system of rules in addition to God’s law. We might expect Jesus to approve of their zealous commitment to obedience. Instead, He was often the harshest with them, accusing them of burdening people with requirements that the Pharisees themselves could not keep. Another name for this way of living is legalism. How do we know if we’re “good”? [Legalism](#) would say to check lots of boxes and avoid certain activities.

In his [letter to the Colossians](#), Paul writes against this kind of apparent wisdom, *Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules: “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!”? These rules, which have to do with things that are all destined to perish with use, are based on merely human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.*

[Man-made rules](#), no matter how wise they appear, don’t promote righteousness. [Scripture tells us](#) that God has already given us everything we need for life and godliness. Do we really believe that? When we make more rules for ourselves and others on top of

the ones He has already given, we effectively call Him a liar. His way is already sufficient.

Tara Owens, author of [Embracing the Body: Finding God in Our Flesh and Bone](#), [argues](#) that our motives can help us determine the morality of an action. So to know if masturbation is healthy, consider helping your teens ask these questions:

- Does this action help me love myself and others more fully and freely, and does it allow me to love God?
- Is this action drawing me into isolation or into deeper connection with God, others, and the world?
- Do I turn to masturbation in seasons of loneliness, isolation, and longing in order to control and fill a void, or as a celebration of sexuality and the gift of my body?
- Rather than asking, “Is this right?” ask, “[Is this best?](#) Is this habit resulting in what I want for my life?”
- What is it that I really want when I masturbate? To be in an actual relationship? To rebel in some way?

Ultimately, this gray area is an invitation to bring every aspect of life into God’s presence. Matthew Lee Anderson, author of [Earthen Vessels: Why Our Bodies Matter to Our Faith](#), [explains](#), “If our ethic is to be Christian, then it must be qualified by the cross and resurrection of Jesus. That is to say, the pattern for our lives and actions must be shaped by a love that treats pleasure as the (sometimes delayed) fruit of our sacrificial self-giving for others, rather than a good without qualification.”

You and your teen may come to different conclusions about the healthiness and holiness of masturbation...Are you ok with that? Will you still choose to enter into conversation, while allowing them to form their own opinions knowing that the Holy Spirit convicts all of us of sin and righteousness?

Here are a few additional principles to consider as you help your teens discern whether or not they will choose to masturbate:

- 1. The body is good.** While sin has infiltrated every aspect of human existence, it can only twist and distort God’s original good gift. Our flesh is beautifully designed, corrupted by sin but redeemable by the God whose intent is to make all things new.
- 2. Sex is a gift from God.** We live in a culture obsessed with comfort, but sometimes the Church has had an overly severe response to that obsession. Holding our natural drives to avoid pain and pursue fulfillment in tension with Jesus’ call to lay down our lives and follow Him is necessary, because these paradoxical messages are both in Scripture.

- 3. Lust is clearly sinful.** Jesus' standard of sin actually went beyond the legalism presented by the Pharisees. He did not want followers who just looked good, but who actually *were* good.
- 4. Whether single or married, our bodies are not our own.** While American culture tells us that to be fully human we need to exercise our rights and take control of what is ours, Paul writes in [1 Corinthians 6](#), "Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body." Our bodies, our personhood, our abilities, and even our limitations are all gifts from God. Similar to pornography, it can feel like masturbation is a completely private choice that will not affect anyone else. In reality, we serve a God who desires complete surrender in our minds, hearts, and yes, even our bodies. Any Christian perspectives on masturbation should be held in light of this standard: *Are we fully and wholly surrendered to Christ?*
- 5. What we do matters to God.** Our habits, from masturbation to brushing our teeth, shape who we are. As Tish Harrison Warren articulates in *The Liturgy of the Ordinary*:

We have everyday habits—formative practices—that constitute daily liturgies. By reaching for my smartphone every morning, I had developed a ritual that trained me toward a certain end: entertainment and stimulation via technology. Regardless of my professed worldview or particular Christian subculture, my unexamined daily habit was shaping me into a worshiper of glowing screens... my daily practices were malforming me, making me less alive, less human, less able to give and receive love throughout my day.

Whatever you decide about masturbation, make sure you talk with your kids about *why* you came to that conclusion.

What do I do if I discover my kid masturbates?

As kids these days say, "Oof!" What an uncomfortable situation. And if *you're* feeling uncomfortable, think of how your kid feels! Remember when someone caught you picking your nose, and then imagine that level of embarrassment hundredfold. That's what they're feeling right now.

Your response should be kind, calm, and understanding and will ultimately depend on

your child's age and level of development. Young kids exploring their bodies in a non-sexual way is very different from a tween or teen masturbating while watching porn (which arguably is quite different from them masturbating without porn or fantasy). Here are some recommendations for how to handle this situation based on your child's age:

- [Young children \(preschool, elementary\)](#)
- [Middle and high schoolers](#)
- [Boys 10 and under](#)
- [Boys 11 years old and older](#)

A Note: We realize this topic can be triggering and can bring up pieces of your story that you would rather leave behind...that's ok! Take the necessary time and space to address those emotions. If you're shocked by something your teen tells you, or don't feel like you have an immediate answer to one of their questions, say something like this, "You haven't done anything wrong, and I want to talk with you about masturbation, but in this moment I don't have a good answer to your question, and I'm feeling too emotional to have a good conversation. Can we talk again in a week [or other set period of time] after I've had some time to think through what I want to say?"

Silence speaks volumes, so by verbally affirming their question and setting a date for a future conversation (rather than avoiding them or not saying anything), you are letting them know that they did nothing wrong. They need to be reassured that asking questions is good and that they aren't to blame for your visceral or emotional response.

If you're bound up in shame yourself, you won't be able to talk with your kids about any of this. So find a trusted friend or counselor and say out loud why it feels so hard to talk about masturbation. Grab a journal and pen and write out a letter to the Lord detailing the parts of your sexual history that you haven't talked about with anyone. Here are some possible questions to begin with:

- What is [healthy sexuality](#)? In what ways am I sexually whole?
- What is sexual brokenness? In what ways am I sexually broken?
- God, how do you view both my sexual wholeness and my sexual brokenness?
- Is it hard for me to talk about masturbation? Why?
- What did my parents teach me about sexuality (both positive and negative)? About masturbation? What am I trying to do differently for my kids in this area?
- What am I teaching my teen about healthy sexuality in every stage of life, including singleness?
- God, how can I start this conversation with my teen? What is it that you would

have me say? What questions should I ask? Will You help me to listen well?

Because this has the potential to be really traumatic and shame-inducing, we highly recommend reading our [Parent's Guide to Shame-Free Parenting](#) before talking with them.

So how do I talk about it?

To start, we need to think about the subtle messages we are sending the next generation about sex. If someone asked the teen in your life, “How does your mom/dad/faith-leader view sexuality?” what would their response be?

Then create an environment that helps both you and your teen feel at ease. Consider avoiding a face-to-face conversation (staring at each other across a table). Go for a drive so you can look out the window or turn up the radio if things get too weird. Your goal isn't to say every important message about sexuality in one sitting. Simply create a space where your teens know that they really can talk with you about anything. And again, you're going to have to be the one to bring it up.

Avoid the assumption that your teen will enjoy married sex someday. God [doesn't promise](#) anyone a spouse or ecstatic sexual fulfillment. So whatever conclusion you come to about the healthiness of masturbation, phrase your thoughts in a way that includes the person who may be single and celibate for life.

Ultimately, aim to have a dialogue, not to be a lecturer. Be curious! Your teen probably has some underdeveloped thoughts, as well as some really profound thoughts. Processing out loud will probably do more for them than just listening to a speech from you. We recommend the questions at the end of this Guide as a starting place so that you aren't forcing your teen to detail their habits.

How can I help my child stop?

If your teen is wanting to stop masturbating but feels like they're caught in an impossible-to-break cycle, here are some other ideas:

- **Notice patterns.** When are you most likely to masturbate? What music have you listened to lately? What Netflix shows are you watching? A pattern will probably

emerge, and from there you can decide which next steps will be helpful.

- **Identify your triggers.** Some people remove certain apps from their phones because they know that scrolling through Instagram or looking at Snap stories will probably lead to lust and/or masturbation and porn.

For girls, where are you in your monthly cycle? Our hormones affect how easily we are aroused. Does your daughter know that it's pretty normal to feel more easily sexually aroused the week before her period?

- **Put up “guard rails.”** Guard rails on a mountain highway keep cars from even getting close to the edge. The cars bump up against them before being in danger of going over a cliff. Make it difficult to follow through on temptation by staying further away from “the cliff” than necessary.

Where are you letting your mind go? When we begin with monitoring our thoughts it is easier to prevent an action we'll regret later. Whenever you have an unhelpful thought, imagine writing it on a piece of paper. Then ball it up and throw it in the trash. It may sound silly, but this is actually a practical way for us to do our part as the Spirit renews our minds.

- **Make a list of helpful distractions.** Take a walk. Discover a new album to listen to. Do something active (yoga, jogging, weight-lifting). Video chat with a friend (especially if you're feeling lonely). Play the piano. Write a short story about something funny or embarrassing that happened last week. Go through an [Examen](#) prayer (Maybe download the [Examen app](#)).
- **Be honest & seek accountability.** There should be at least one person in your life who knows pretty much everything about you. [James encourages](#) us to confess our sins and weaknesses to God *and* to each other. Also, consider an accountability app like [rTribe](#).
- **Enjoy a hug.** Weird question, but how often does someone rub your shoulders? Or hold your hand? There aren't a lot of appropriate outlets for non-sexual physical affection in American culture, especially for men. What if masturbation is just a longing for comfort? Maybe that comfort can come from a real sense of community. We deeply desire friendship intimacy, i.e. the ability to be fully ourselves with no fear of rejection. Let's create healthy and appropriate outlets for physical touch. If you don't feel comfortable asking for a hug, consider getting a [weighted blanket](#)!

Final Thoughts

Culture tells us that we're missing out on the good life if we aren't sexually fulfilled. Yet Jesus, the ultimate human, remained single and celibate for His 33 years here. Can we dare to believe that [Jesus had sexual longings and urges too](#)? In the same way that His sexual experience did not disqualify Him from being 100% God, our sexual experiences are not separate from our spirituality or from our mission of following Christ with every inch of our beings.

In *The Liturgy of the Ordinary* Tish Harrison Warren writes, "The new life into which we are baptized is lived out in days, hours, and minutes. God is forming us into a new people. And the place of that formation is in the small moments of today." What would it be like to see masturbation as an invitation to more vulnerable conversations with your teen, and therefore a deeper and more authentic relationship with them? An invitation to more questioning and wrestling with God, learning to believe that He will speak to us about even this area of life? Do we believe that He cares about every choice we make? Then let us enter His presence with questions about our sexuality. Do we believe that sexuality was His idea? Then let us bring even those pieces of ourselves into His healing, compassionate, truthful presence.

We leave you with this encouragement from [Paul to the Roman church](#), "So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out."

Related Axis Resources

- [The Culture Translator](#), a **free** weekly email that offers biblical insight on all things teen-related
- [A Parent's Guide to Pornography bundle](#)
- [A Parent's Guide to the Sex Talk](#)
- [Dating Conversation Kit](#)
- Check out [axis.org](#) for even more resources!
- If you'd like access to all of our digital resources, both current and yet to come, for one low yearly or monthly fee, check out the [All Axis Pass](#)!

Additional Resources

- [Rethinking Sexuality](#) by Dr. Juli Slattery
- “[How Your Sex Life is Connected to Your Spiritual Life](#),” Authentic Intimacy, Episode 117
- “[Rethinking Sexuality in Your Parenting](#),” Authentic Intimacy, Episode 220
- [Moral Revolution](#) (especially the resources under “[sex](#)”)

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Recap

- American culture encourages us to do what feels good, live for the moment, and regard our sexuality as something that is purely physical.
- Unfortunately, some Christian communities have responded by equating sexuality with sin, implying that the body is somehow less holy than the spirit (gnosticism), or imposing legalistic requirements on top of God's scriptural commands.
- Deciding how to talk with our teens about masturbation is actually an invitation to engage with the discomfort that comes from seeking God's wisdom in the absence of a clear, universal command.
- This topic encourages humility as we claim God's grace by sharing freely and openly about areas of shame.

Hint: Screen shot or print this page to refer back to later!

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Discussion Questions

- What does culture have to say about masturbation (maybe ask about a specific song or show)? Do you agree or disagree with those messages?
- What have you heard from the church about masturbation? Do you agree or disagree with those messages?
- What messages have you heard from me about masturbation? Is there anything you disagree with? Why?
- Why does it feel weird to talk about our bodies and sex? Are there any ways that I as a parent can make these topics feel less shameful?
- What's your reason for pursuing purity? (Maybe watch this [interview](#) together and discuss some of Chloe's answers.)

Hint: Screen shot or print this page to refer back to later!