

Family Legacy Institute

Tools For Families Building Godly Legacies

So How Far Can I Go? A Discussion For Christian Teens And Parents

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This chapter is written for teens and parents to read together and discuss. At every place there's a ♦, stop and talk together about what you've just read.

Pop music has always been a reflection of culture. In your grandparents' day, Bob Dylan's "*The Times They Are A-Changin'*" was an announcement of a militant youth culture about to change the values of Western society. In your parents' day, Joni Mitchell's "*Big Yellow Taxi*" was a forerunner of the "green movement." And Sting's song, "*History Will Teach Us Nothing*" was a cultural cry for meaning. Pop music reflects culture.

So what's pop music saying in the first decade of the 21st Century? Here are three intro lines to songs that you might even know. See if you catch a theme.

1.

Touch my body, make me feel like I never felt
Deliver it, make me shiver up from head to toe
Move my waist line side to side
Come on touch my body, make me feel like I never felt
[Song, "*Touch My Body*," ~ by Ashanti]

2.

I like 'em big, I like 'em small
I like 'em round, I love 'em all
I just what to look and see
What you got for me
[Song, "*Show Me Your Tits*" ~ by Anvil]

3.

She makes the hairs on the back of my neck stand up
Just one touch
And I erupt like a volcano and cover her with my nut
Babygirl you make me say (Oh oh oh)
And I just can't think (of anything else I'd rather do)
Than to hear you sing (sing my name the way you do)

When we do our thing (when we do the things we do)
Babygirl you make me say (Oh oh oh)
[Song, “*Sexy Love*” ~ by Ne-Yo]

While not all pop music is about sex, a lot more of it is today than a few years ago, and the words and actions expressed today are dramatically more sexual and graphic than they have *ever* been in the history of pop music. And if you’re a teen today, you’re undoubtedly aware of hip-hop lyrics, where girls are “bitches” and “hos” and where the “f-bomb” is as common as leaves on summer trees.

This is to say, you are growing up in *the most highly sexualized culture* since the ancient biblical cities of Sodom and Gomorrah ~ for real. The sad thing about it is that your life is literally being bent by it, and for the most part you’re unaware of the effect it’s having on you. You just think of it as “normal.” You might be thinking, “Hey, I see all the sex stuff in my world ~ I’m not blind.” And sure, you do. But what you’re not aware of is what it would be like to grow up in a teen world that is not super-sexually-saturated.

Let me give you a picture of that world. It may sound weird and foreign, but it’s the world your grandparents knew.

- Girls couldn’t wear short skirts to school – the skirt had to be at the knee when the girl was standing, or she was sent home to change clothes.
- Boys had to wear pants with belts, and shirts tucked in.
- Zero cleavage could be shown, or a girl would be sent home.
- There were no sexy TV or magazine ad campaigns aimed at kids.
- The only place you could see naked bodies was in *National Geographic* magazines.
- It was generally safe for kids to hitch-hike.
- HIV-AIDS didn’t exist, nor did herpes, chlamydia, or HPV.
- Almost nobody had heard of oral or anal sex.
- Neighbors watched out for each others’ kids.
- Kids played outside much of the time, and nobody worried about some pedophile kidnapping them or abusing them.
- *All* TV shows were “clean” (no homosexuality, no sleeping around, no bad language).
- Virtually nobody got pregnant in high school; almost nobody got pregnant in college.
- Movies didn’t show nudity, period. Love-making scenes were left to the imagination.
- No stores advertised women’s underwear in their display windows.
- And of course, there were no Internet nor cell phones, so porn was all but non-existent. ♦

That may sound like a strange, perhaps boring world. But it was a safer world back then, than the world in which you’re growing up. This being so, serious questions emerge from the world in which you’re living:

- How do kids today figure out right vs. wrong?
- What *is* right? What *is* wrong? Who says so?
- Are there some things that are *always* right and *always* wrong?
- How do kids learn about what can really hurt them, versus what’s safe and helpful?

- How do kids gain the insight needed to escape advertising aimed at manipulating teens?
- How do kids gain the strength to not copy peers whose lives are crashing and burning?

You know that the sex thing is pretty much wide open today, starting in late grade school or early junior high. And pop music like Ashati's lyrics (above) makes a strong case to use sex as a personal form of entertainment. So how do kids today protect themselves? The answer is that millions of kids today crash and burn. It's an extremely dangerous world for today's kids. Here are a few examples of crashing and burning:

- Millions of girls ages 12-19 have babies, thereby becoming single moms ~ and single moms are the fastest growing category of poverty in the United States today
- Millions of teens get STDs, and most don't know it until damage has already been done
- Millions of teens are getting hooked on porn, which thereby leads to failed marriages and sex addiction
- Suicide is the #3 killer of teens, and is closely correlated with two things: 1) broken homes, and 2) broken love relationships in which teens were sexually active
- Between 20 – 33% of girls reach their 18th birthday having been sexually abused
- Respect for women, which had been growing in the 1970s – 1990s, is now being hugely eroded through pornography and hip-hop music
- More than half of American kids today spend at least some time in single-parent families, which often lead to attachment issues in adulthood

The rest of this chapter is aimed at answer one question. It's a question that's like the center ring on a bull's eye target ~ the ripples spread out in all directions, answering a thousand other questions. The question is one that teens have asked since before the wheel was invented ~ "How far can I go sexually?"