

# Teaching Children God's Design for Human Sexuality

## Episode 234

Carole Joy Seid [00:00:02]:

Over the course of this podcast, we've interviewed some amazing guests. During the month of October, we are bringing episodes out of our archives to help us with the hard topics of our time and culture, such as human sexuality, God's design for marriage, and discipling our kids in a divided age. We share these episodes to fortify your confidence in God's word as you face tough questions and hard realities with your children. We hope this conversation will give you the assurance that God's way is always best. You're listening to the Homeschool Made Simple podcast. This is a podcast to help you homeschool simply, inexpensively, and enjoyably. Listen in.

Carole Joy Seid [00:00:50]:

Today, I am thrilled to have 2 personal friends that I respect so much, Dr. Stanton and Brenna Jones. Dr. Jones has been a professor of psychology and core at Wheaton College for many years and a provost there at the college for 20 years. He is a nationally recognized Christian expert on sexuality, and he has written some of the most revered books on psychology and Christianity and also on homosexuality. And he has written many articles for professional journals such as American Psychologist. His lovely wife, Brenna, has done graduate work in, theology and biblical studies, and she has a huge ministry to women in the church. And I have personally had the privilege of sitting under her. But today, we are gonna be talking about something that is a bit adult in content. And so if you have children in the room, you might wanna get them busy doing something else.

Carole Joy Seid [00:01:56]:

And we're gonna be talking about a series of books that Stan and Brenna have written, and they're gonna tell us all about them. So welcome to my podcast.

Brenna Jones [00:02:06]:

Thank you. Thank you for having us.

Carole Joy Seid [00:02:08]:

My pleasure. So, Stan and Brenna, would you share a little bit about what, brought you to read these books and then maybe, to write them? I'm sorry. To write these books. And do you is this series it's called God's Design for Sex. That is what the entire series is called. Correct? And they're published by Navigators Press, Nav Press. And what, led you to write these books, And I'm gonna read the titles in a moment. And how long ago did you write them?

Stanton Jones [00:02:41]:

Well, we began really 3 decades ago, and, we our our kids were young, and, we were wondering how we were wondering how do we do the how do we do this? And we were looking around for resources. At the same time, I got thrown into teaching a course in graduate level course in human sexuality at Wheaton College. And really just as a as a nice breaker, I started asking the most of the students who who grew up in Christian homes, how did you hear how did your family handle talking about sex? And and I was expecting to hear great answers because I didn't grow up in a Christian family and and, I was, you know, just naive and and but what I heard back was a whole lot of silence and shame and and not not not very many good lessons. And so, so we we decided to try to do something about that. So we we came across a book by Caroline Nystrom that was written for 5 to 8 year olds, which did a great job. Back then, it had already gone out of print. It sold, like, about a 1,000 copies and and it had gone out of print and was no longer available anywhere. We knew Carolyn, so we got a copy, and we thought, this is lovely, but it's it's only one book.

Stanton Jones [00:03:42]:

What we need is a series. Yes. Out of that evolved our idea of writing these 4 books for a different age levels for kids to help parents have these conversations and a guidebook for parents. And so, we we published the first books in 1995. And so

Brenna Jones [00:03:58]:

Wow. At the time, I was also in a teaching in a women's bible study. Yes. Most of the women in the bible study were about my age with little kids and kind of in the throes of all that Yeah. My children. And just I was hearing a lot of stories and a lot of questions from the moms. And I think the combination of Stan's teaching at the college and then the practical stories that I was hearing, we thought, you know, I bet we could put something together here. The the this is a huge need.

Carole Joy Seid [00:04:34]:

And and we're all so grateful you did. Let me read the titles of the books for our listeners. So *The Story of Me*, which is ages 3 to 5, subtitled babies, bodies, and a very

good god. And then the second book is *Before I was Born: God Knew My Name for Ages 5 through 8*. And then ages 8 through 12, *What's the Big Deal? Why God Cares About Sex?* I love these titles. *Facing the Facts, the Truth About Sex and You*, ages 12 through 16. And then *The Parent's Guide*, which is how and when to tell your kids about sex, a lifelong approach to shaping your child's sexual character. So with this little library of books, from the time your children are 2 actually, 3 until they're getting married, you've kinda covered the gamut.

Stanton Jones [00:05:30]:

That's what that's what we're aiming for. And and we were you as we talked to parents, we we we thought we can teach principles, but many parents say, I just have trouble getting the words out. So that was really the idea of of giving the making the books so parents can read with their kids because then the parents in a sense have a script to get the get the topic on the table, and then it can free you to have have the conversation regularly with your children and have it be part of everyday life and which is how how where you think it should be.

Brenna Jones [00:05:55]:

We wanna empower parents to feel, like they had some tools.

Carole Joy Seid [00:06:01]:

Yes.

Brenna Jones [00:06:02]:

So it's kind of a jumping off place for them to to really I mean, parents are the best educators of their children. And why wouldn't they be in this area as well? So we Sure. We're strongly about that. Yeah.

Carole Joy Seid [00:06:17]:

And I just love I mean, my son and daughter-in-law just used the book, which one is it now? They used, yeah, what's the big deal with my granddaughter and she just turned 11? And, it was the first time she'd ever really heard You know the facts of life and it was a little bit shocking and a little bit, you know embarrassing But they made it this really cozy night and they built a fire and they put the little ones to bed And they had special little I don't know hot chocolate or whatever they were doing and they just made it really special and really sweet And I don't know what they would have done if they didn't have your book. What would they have used? I don't I don't even want to think about. There's just not a lot out there for families And they were just thrilled and and as I told you off air that JJ wanted you to be thanked for this. I know this was a big

sacrifice and a ton of work. How long did it take you to write them, and did you do them all in one kind of sweep? Or how did it happen?

Brenna Jones [00:07:21]:

I guess it was a more like a 2 year process, wasn't it?

Stanton Jones [00:07:25]:

At least at least 3 years. Yeah. We we wrote we wrote the parent's guide book first. To be honest, Nav Press, a a very conservative Christian press, is a little a little bit nervous about about publishing some of the area of sexuality. So they they actually asked us to produce the parents' book first so they could check us out. We actually passed the test and the moral test, then the kids' books. And and so and the the latest revision, we we did emerge in the nineties, and then we did revision in 2007, but, of course, the world has changed tectonically since then. And so it's, it's the things kids are facing, we wouldn't even have dreamed of even even 15 years ago.

Stanton Jones [00:08:02]:

And so the the revision process this time was really quite massive because we had to deal with a lot more issues, and and we felt it important to be up on the on the latest science as well as also being very as deeply rooted in biblical and theological truth as we could be. And so it was you put a lot of work into this latest revision, which just came out this last summer.

Carole Joy Seid [00:08:24]:

I can tell. And, you know, I was, off air. I was reading the a, which one was I reading? I think what's the big deal? Rereading it. Because when I was a children's pastor, I read through them all in a fell swoop and just was dancing with joy that these existed. And, but today as I was rereading what's the big deal, and you were talking about homosexuality and different things. I don't know if that was in the original set or not, but it was handled so lovingly.

Stanton Jones [00:08:56]:

Many parents assume that their kids are are more sheltered than they are, but kids are like sponges and they read the culture around them. And they oftentimes are drawing conclusions that that parents aren't aren't even and hearing things that parents are shocked to find out. And so one of our principles is is that as a parent, you you have the biggest impact on your child when you're the first one to tell them and tell them the truth. And then by doing that, you establish a basis of trust, and they will come to you and and and ask you about these things rather than going thinking, oh, I can't I can't touch this with mom or dad. I better go go start looking for information on the on

the Internet, God forbid, or Oh. Back at school or whatever wherever they happen to be. You know?

Carole Joy Seid [00:09:37]:

Brenda, did you wanna add something to that? You had a look in your eye.

Brenna Jones [00:09:43]:

I think just just that that sense of feeling confident enough that you sort of set aside your own fear and discomfort as a parent. Yes. Your ultimate goal is to love and nurture your child into adulthood. And, you know, that's our privilege and responsibility, and we can do that. God has given us all

Carole Joy Seid [00:10:12]:

that we need. Yes. And now we have these tools, so he's really giving us all we need. In in What's the Big Deal, you talked about, pornography. And the way you handled that, it really almost made me cry as I was reading it, talking about women who don't value themselves and don't know how precious they are. And and and some of them are in slavery and, you know, that type of thing as they're making these movies and explaining that and then leaving so many things open ended. Like, this is what we're gonna talk about now, but we will continue talking about this. I loved the way you kept, you know, giving that in the book as you're reading it with your child to say, this is the information you need now, but we're gonna keep talking about this as as time goes on.

Stanton Jones [00:11:01]:

We also really wanted as we read in the books, we wanted to really empower parents to think through the issues and and and, you know, there there's a lot of there's a lot of there's a lot of black and white areas of things that are moral and things that are immoral, but there are also some gray areas. When does a kid start dating? What what constitutes dating? You know, when is it ever permissible to kiss or, you know, all these kind of questions. And and so we rather than rather than try to throw out the right answer for these things, we try to lay out the biblical principles that are involved, the character principles that are involved, and and empower parents to think those things through so that so they're the one that's teaching their kids, not not not just feeding them the mind that we that we give them. So yeah.

Carole Joy Seid [00:11:41]:

Yeah. That is so helpful. I feel like parenting right now is like walking through a minefield. And even just 30 or 40 years ago, that minefield didn't exist to the extent that it exists today. We need these tools. Wow. I love the new illustrations on the

children's you know, the younger children's books. They're so beautifully done, so sensitively done.

Carole Joy Seid [00:12:06]:  
Well, so

Stanton Jones [00:12:07]:  
very much. Yes. They did a great job.

Carole Joy Seid [00:12:10]:  
They really did. These are treasures. For people who have, grandchildren, I can't think of a better set of books to give your kids, you know, like, quietly. When I brought these over to my family, I I texted him and said, I'm bringing some books to you. And then later, my daughter-in-law and I were chanting, and I said, well, I didn't sometimes a child might look at your text. So I didn't even wanna explain what the subject was about. And then I said, you might wanna put these in a special place in your home as I handed them to her in a little bag so that busy little eyes didn't, you know, get involved in them. But I love, Brenda, what you said about parents being that first, the first introducer of these precious and sacred things.

Carole Joy Seid [00:12:59]:  
And how many of us learn these things at camp or, you know, school or on a playground or, you know, in a really twisted, horrible, crazy way. Ugh. I didn't wanna think about it. For my own life. And yet, I'm thinking how precious it is that that our kids can get this experience from us in a loving, safe environment. And added to that is we know our children better than anyone else, and we know

Brenna Jones [00:13:28]:  
what they can handle, what's age appropriate. And, you know, others, media, they don't know our children like we do.

Carole Joy Seid [00:13:38]:  
Or love them the way we do.

Brenna Jones [00:13:40]:  
Yes. That's right.

Carole Joy Seid [00:13:41]:  
Yeah. What are some testimonials that you've kinda received as as these books have gone out into the world?

Stanton Jones [00:13:49]:

Well, it's you know, we we just we just get a lot a lot of good feedback from people that that that that they were helpful. People, parents saying that they they couldn't find the words to introduce things, but they they they they are are by going through the books, they they they get they get the phrases out, and and and then they find that the kids frame the conversation well, ask the questions well. And, so we're we're just we're we and it's actually one of my joys teaching at Wheaton College that, you know, young adults come up to me and say, I hate to admit it, but I grew up reading all your books.

Carole Joy Seid [00:14:21]:

They had some pretty good parents. That is such a blessing.

Brenna Jones [00:14:26]:

Our son had a really funny experience. He and his wife were going to an adult ed, parented us in their church. One of the Sundays was teaching on sexuality, and they held up all of our books and said, these are a great set of books and talked about them and recommended them. And Brandon was sitting there and said, you know what? My parents

Stanton Jones [00:14:47]:

wrote those

Carole Joy Seid [00:14:48]:

books. Oh my word. That is so precious. Wow. Well, they're the gold standard. And, years ago, I was working with a family who were teaching a human sexuality class in Nashville, Tennessee at a great church. And I said, what are you using? Tell me what you're using so I can recommend it. And she said, oh, we're using these books by Stan and Brenna Jones.

Carole Joy Seid [00:15:14]:

I'm like, excuse me? Are you serious? They're friends of mine. What? Like, you're so quiet and so humble about things. You don't raise the banner and say, do you know who we are? Do you know what we've done? But thank you. Thank you. Thank you. That here, right you know, the treasure's right in your own hometown sometimes. And all along, these books have been waiting. And as I told you when I give seminars on my handouts, these books are in a little box on my handouts on human sexuality, and I feel every family needs to own a set of these books.

Carole Joy Seid [00:15:49]:

And it will be some of the best money they'll ever spend.

Stanton Jones [00:15:52]:

We're honored we're honored that you recommend them, Carol, and we we hold you in high esteem. So we're just grateful that to know that you think positively of them. So we just Thank you. We think anything for the good of the church.

Carole Joy Seid [00:16:03]:

Amen. Yeah. Well, I hold you both in high esteem, and it is just such a pleasure to recommend these and get them into people's hands. So they're called the God's Design for Sex series, and there's 5 of them, and they're published by Navigators Press. And every family needs to buy these books before they buy, like, a refrigerator. Like, it's the absolute essential for raising children in the day and age in which we live, and I'm so grateful for you both. So, Stan, would you mind praying for the families that are listening to this, that are navigating these interesting waters?

Stanton Jones [00:16:42]:

Dear father in heaven, we thank you that that the same love that you have shown to your own son, you now shed upon us as your your sons and daughters. And we are blessed as Christian parents to have children that are entrusted to us for for their formation. I pray for the parents that are listening, Lord, that you would empower them to speak the truth lovingly to your their children, that they would have the courage to to find whatever resources they need, Lord, and to given the hostility and distortions and warped nature of our culture today in this area, where biblical truth is so looked down upon, Lord, give these parents the resources they need, Lord, to shape their children in a way that's biblical, grounded in your truth, grounded in the good gift of sexuality to us, and, to help those children to grow up to be strong representatives of your of your character in a broken world. In Christ, we pray. Amen.

Carole Joy Seid [00:17:40]:

Amen.

Rachel Winchester [00:17:43]:

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