



**A Better Way**

# **Review: *Protecting Their Purity***

**WHAT IT MEANS TO THINK LIKE GOD DOES ABOUT SEXUAL ABUSE  
AND WHY WE DO NOT RECOMMEND THIS BOOK**

**By Patricia Lewis & Hope Anne Dueck**

## **Introduction**

In the foreword of the book, *Protecting Their Purity*, Marvin Wengerd rightly points out that in the past, sexual abuse had been swept under the rug, and that needs to stop. To this purpose, Mr. Wengerd has collected and edited a selection of essays written by various authors which was published by Carlisle Press.

In the foreword, he identifies a need to “finally think like God does about it.” (pg. IV) How does God think about it? Ephesians 5 verses 3 -5 say, “But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.”

The Oxford Dictionary defines “purity” as “Freedom from immorality, especially of a sexual nature” (Oxford University Press, 2019, “purity” entry). Morality, the opposite of immorality, is defined as, “the principles concerning the distinction between right and wrong or good and bad behavior” (Oxford University Press, 2019, “morality” entry). To protect purity, then, one must teach the principles that distinguish between right and wrong, or good and bad behavior, especially of a sexual nature.

The purpose of this review is to evaluate how effectively the book we are reviewing accomplishes this

goal. To do this we will provide a summary of best practices regarding the teaching of moral principles relating to sexuality, and then compare the information in the book to these best practices.

## **What children should know and learn**

One very simple thing to teach children at a young age is the proper names of their body parts – all of them, including genitalia. Along with teaching them the names of their body parts, parents should also teach children that certain parts of the body are private, or personal. There are times when it may be necessary to receive medical attention, or for young children to receive help with toileting or bathing, and parents should help their children understand the difference between necessary help and unnecessary and/or unwanted touching or looking.

Teaching proper names of body parts and privacy helps children to recognize that certain types of touch are inappropriate, and if inappropriate touching has happened, to accurately describe what did happen. Loss of innocence is not caused by knowing proper names for body parts, but knowing the names of body parts may help preserve innocence.

In the book, the practice of naming body parts was suggested in the essay “Protecting the Innocent” (pg. 32-39). However, this excellent advice was followed by telling the child that “no one should ever see it except Mommy” (Pg. 36). On page 124, it also says, “He/she should be taught that no one should ever touch or see

his/her private parts.” This is not helpful should other caregivers, including medical professionals, need to help a child, and also later in life, such as in marriage.

In other places, the book modeled and recommended the use of euphemistic phrases and indirect references rather than naming what is being discussed. For example, in “Because I Love Her”, there is a story written as a model of how to talk to your child, where a pregnant mother tells her daughter that the baby will come out through a “baby door” (pg. 57). When the child is told about the menstrual cycle, she is told there is “an opening between your legs that will bleed” (pg. 71). The book’s recommendations are inconsistent.

Studies have shown that children need to understand and experience healthy, appropriate, non-sexual affectionate touch. This physical affection boosts brain development and reduces stress in children (Whiddon & Montgomery, 2011, pg. 6). It models healthy ways of relating and fills a need for affection. Healthy, affectionate touch is important throughout the human lifespan, in fact.

In the book, the essay entitled “Amy’s Dilemma” (144-149) addresses the issue of physical abuse, which is certainly an unhealthy kind of touch, in a truthful way. However, the essay writers in *Protecting Their Purity* do not seem to understand the importance of healthy touch. On page 52, it says that it becomes inappropriate for mothers to embrace their sons or fathers their daughters. This is contrary to best practice, which says that it is important that children receive appropriate affectionate touch from both parents.

Children also should be taught from before they can talk that they have the right to say no to unwanted (unnecessary) touch. It is unwise and inappropriate for parents to force affection on a child or force a child to show affection unwillingly. Children can be taught to be polite and courteous without forcing shows of affection or allowing touch they are not comfortable with.

In the book, a very practical essay entitled “What Would You Do If...?” (134-137) offers a suggestion via story of a way that parents can teach and remind children of safety practices, including those relating to sexual abuse, and could easily be adapted to teach how to courteously decline physical touch.

However, the book never mentioned teaching

children to say no to unwanted touch. Instead, the advice in the book is to teach girls to keep their dresses down (pg 21) or that if anyone tries to pull a girl’s panties down to touch or see her private parts, she should not do it and come tell her mom right away (pg 22, 36, 124 also see page 68). This teaching is dismally insufficient to help protect children from molestation and abuse, especially considering that it can happen even with clothing in place.

When it comes to teaching children about sexuality, best practice is to have an on-going conversation with children, answering questions in age-appropriate ways, and always being honest and truthful. This starts with the teaching of proper names for body parts as toddlers, and the concept of privacy, and continues throughout childhood into the teen years, teaching them about the growth and changing of bodies, procreation, and sexual behaviors.

It is better to teach children properly in the first place than to have to correct faulty information they came upon through peers or other input later. Teaching factual, age appropriate information will not compromise the innocence or purity of a child, but such teaching can help to preserve their innocence.

In the book, the truth that teaching will not corrupt innocence or purity was stated in various essays. On page 23 it says, “Your approach to purity should always be calm and on an even keel. Don’t dramatize bad men doing terrible stuff to little boys and girls. Don’t present facts in an urgent or agitated voice. This plants fear! Your goal is to keep them innocent and carefree, yet have an understanding on certain rules”<sup>1</sup>

In the essay “Protecting the Innocent by Someone who Used to Be” (pg. 32-39), the author mentions some specific things to talk about with girls and boys, and at younger ages than parents might otherwise be inclined, such as budding breasts, menstrual cycles, and wet dreams. The author mentions that lack of teaching from parents leads to natural curiosity, and seeking out answers (pg. 35, also 124).

Another essay is similarly detailed in describing how a mother should talk to her daughters, suggesting

1 Reviewer’s note: the rules listed thereafter vary in helpfulness. However, the truth in this quote is notable.

this discussion happen around age 9-11 (pg. 111).<sup>2</sup> On page 125, the book mentions animal breeding as an opportunity for teaching, which is a good point in rural settings. However, in some other essays, the language used is vague and misleading. Allusions are made to “the facts of life” or “information about sexuality.” The teaching in the book on this topic is inconsistent. It would be wise and helpful to have a consistent message throughout.

In addition to the factual teaching about bodies and sexual development, parents ideally will teach their children how to respond if they encounter pornography before they ever see it. Teaching a strong sense of respect for themselves and others, as well as teaching practical steps they can take to avoid being drawn in will be helpful.<sup>3</sup>

In the book, the essays “As a Roaring Lion” (150-155) and “Consequence and Change” (138-143) are personal testimonies that address the need for parents to prepare children for exposure to pornography, and the hope for change after being drawn into a homosexual relationship. As the writer of “A Roaring Lion” says, pornography exposure must be addressed with children.

The same message is given on page 39. You must believe when they tell you and continue to support them and help them as they work through it. Teaching sons to avert their eyes is mentioned on page 49 of the book, though further instruction is not given.

## What parents should know and learn

In addition to educating children effectively, parents can play a role in helping prevent sexual abuse by being aware and alert, being a safe place for their children, and also recognizing abuse for what it is.

It is always wise for parents to be actively supervising their children. Best practice is to supervise

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2 This is late as some girls begin menstruating by age 9, and the essay notes that such conversations should happen to prepare, not to explain after it happened.

3 A Better Way recommends the book *Good Pictures/Bad Pictures* as a resource to help teach this topic.

children even when they are in familiar places or with familiar people. However, as important as supervision is, it is important that parents know that in some cases, children have been abused in the presence and sight of their parents or other adults.<sup>4</sup>

We encourage parents to be sure their children are within their sight or responsibly supervised, and also to be sure to teach children and watch for other signs or concerns. Parents need to know that supervision alone is not prevention. It is important to note that in over 90% of the cases of childhood sexual abuse, the abuse is inflicted by someone known to the child, and often someone trusted.

*Protecting Their Purity* emphasized supervision heavily and repeatedly. The essay, “Where are the Mothers?” was focused only on that (pg 3- 12) as was the essay, “More than Cows and Babies,” (128-133) and supervision was mentioned in several other places as well. (pg. 19, 37, 50, 107, 120, 125, 155) *Protecting Their Purity* covered this practice thoroughly. In one essay it was suggested that adults take turns supervising children, and in others it was suggested that parents, most often mothers, supervise their own children. Indisputably, supervision was a highly recommended practice in this book.

A child should be safest at home, in a loving family. Best practice is that parents are open and honest with children and offer them privacy for bathing and changing. Children should be taught to do the same for each other and their parents. Generally, a healthy policy at home is that doors remain open apart from time spent changing and using the bathroom. This allows less time for mischief behind closed doors and supports open relationships.

As for siblings, best practice is for siblings to be protective of each other and the safest people to be around. When this is not so, no amount of supervision or open doors can make a child feel safe when the abuser is in the home. Should a parent or sibling be found to be abusive to another member of the household, best practice is that the abusive person be removed from the

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4 Please see [https://www.tribdem.com/news/experts-abusers-may-use-magicians-techniques/article\\_2d90844e-387a-11e8-8fe5-cf1387513ea7.html](https://www.tribdem.com/news/experts-abusers-may-use-magicians-techniques/article_2d90844e-387a-11e8-8fe5-cf1387513ea7.html) for more on this.

home and the abuse reported to the authorities. Professional help should be sought for both victim and perpetrator.

*Protecting Their Purity* contains an essay in which the author says daughters should never be left alone with older boys, even their own brothers. (49) This mistrust of husbands and sons is advised extensively in the article "Protecting Our Daughters" (48-54) and mentioned elsewhere as well. Bedroom and bathroom arrangements that open the door to temptation must be avoided (124) according to another essay.

This level of distrust is not helpful. In some cases, bed and bath arrangements cannot be changed as advised. Furthermore, sexual abuse can happen between same gender children as well as opposite gender; boys can be abused as well as girls. The distrust and arrangements suggested do not address the need for safe, loving relationships.

There is some advice given on page 50 of the book that addresses abusive family members. The advice is "...don't ever leave your daughters alone with that person and teach them they are not to sit in his lap". While the sentence, "While we do want to come to a place of forgiveness and release to those that have harmed us, we will not forget that the protection of our daughters is more important than any kind of trust we may have built with former abusers," is true and important, keep in mind that supervision is not sufficient to prevent abuse. Someone who has abused should not be around children.

There is a category of behaviors that are inappropriate but age appropriate and should be addressed as such. This is where young children, generally ages 3-6, curious about their own bodies and the bodies of others, engage in show and tell type behaviors. This would occur between children of similar ages and developmental stages, or a younger child may attempt to initiate with an older child.

Upon discovery of such behavior, best practice is to teach, to increase supervision for a time, and avoid punishment or shame. An appropriate response would be to remind the child what they have been taught regarding privacy and their bodies, or if they had not been taught, use the situation as a learning opportunity. Increased supervision follows.

Harsh punishment or shaming is inappropriate and unnecessary for this non-sexual exploration. However, if there is a significant age difference, developmental or I.Q. inequality, or one child is upset and the other is distinctly content or happy about it, these are concerning signs that indicate a need for professional assistance in addressing the situation. Contrary to the book's comments (pg 107), different background is NOT a primary cause for concern. Plain background does not prevent children from being inappropriate.

In *Protecting Their Purity* there is an essay, "Protecting the Innocent by Someone Who Used to Be", in which the author describes the importance of parental teaching in reducing and even eliminating this kind of exploratory behavior. Otherwise, supervision is generally emphasized to eliminate the opportunity for such curiosity to be explored. The book also suggests that punishment may be appropriate on page 107. We reiterate that punishment for these behaviors is not an appropriate response. Parents need to foster communication, and punishment for these behaviors will suppress communication, not increase it.

It is very common for children to explore their bodies and discover that touching certain parts is pleasurable. In young children this type of exploration and learning is nonsexual and the appropriate way to handle it is to remind children that those parts of the body are private. It is unwise to shame, punish, or otherwise forcibly stop children from doing this, and better to make clear that it is inappropriate in public or in front of others in a matter of fact way if necessary.

In *Protecting Their Purity*, when such behaviors were mentioned, they were taught to be wrong. There was no distinction between lustful masturbation and body exploration. The book mentions behaviors described as self-abuse, self-gratification, playing with oneself or playing with her bottom, the habit, and masturbation, all of which were to be forbidden. There was no distinction between normal childish body exploration and adult sexual behaviors.

However, regardless of one's beliefs about masturbation, childhood behavior should not be punished, and conflating it with adult sexual behavior is harmful. If there is concern about the child's actions being inappropriate, it would be wise to seek professional medical

advice.

Unfortunately, even with excellent teaching, constant parental vigilance, and following best practice, children can still be abused. For this reason, a parent should know what signs a child may exhibit if they have been or are being abused. Common indications include sexual acting out, changes in personality, changes in grades or study habits, avoidance of people they liked before or sudden changes in how they relate to specific people, loss of interest in things they previously enjoyed. None of these is a sure sign of abuse (although the sexual acting out is strongly suggestive) but different children may react differently and it is important to note any sudden or large changes and investigate the cause.

*Protecting Their Purity* mentioned signs to look for in several places. Wringing hands, nervousness, bathroom issues, unexplained crying, and other behavioral changes were mentioned in one essay (pg. 107). Another place describes the victim as “more withdrawn” and it said he “struggled with outbursts of anger that were very uncharacteristic of him.” (pg. 12) Uneasiness, numbness, anger, and self-harm were mentioned also. (pg. 29) The essay, “Recognizing Families of Incest” (177-180) has a good deal of valuable information about patterns in families where abuse occurs. In this case, having various essays with different examples can be helpful in illustrating the range of responses that can occur.

Best practice is to prevent abuse, and not just recognize it after it happens. Ask God to give you wisdom and discernment and help you to be alert and protect your children. It is also important to be aware of things to look for in those who abuse. If you are aware of a peer or older child who ignores boundaries, whether emotional or physical space, be cautious. If someone isolates children or is very touchy-feely, they need to be watched closely. If someone is very interested in children and attends children’s events, and is more drawn to vulnerable children than to their own peers, that is also reason to be alert.

Adults who abuse children tend to be harder to detect. Many have learned to charm whole groups of people. Predators often try to gain trust of entire families and congregations so the children they molest will not be believed. They have improved their ability to sin-

gle out a child who might be susceptible to their attention. Some things to watch for are a lack of appropriate boundaries, preferential behavior toward particular children, and a predatory look in their eye when observing children. (This may not be obvious to all but is said to be the most consistent sign.)

There is a difference between mutual sexual exploration and abuse. Peers with a similar level of knowledge, age and status may engage in mutual sexual exploration, for which the fault lies equally with both. However, where there is a distinct hierarchical structure, children of those in authority may have higher status by virtue of their familial association. Where men are given authority to lead simply because they are male, gender differences may result in status differences as well.

The primary concern is that we should not lay blame or guilt on someone who was not truly making a free choice of their own. The child may need help and support to heal from the abuse, though it may not be apparent that it was abuse at first glance. When use of power, threats, manipulation or intimidation, bribes or controlling behaviors, and demands for secrecy are part of the situation, it is abuse. Also, when one party knows it is wrong but conceals that or ignores the other person’s concerns, that is also a warning that all was not well.

The primary focus of *Protecting Their Purity* was on girls and preventing abuse done to them. Boys were described as needing supervision when with girls, and the advice is given never to trust boys to be alone with girls. However, abuse can happen to boys too. Sons need teaching no less than girls do, and deserve attention and protection as well. In fact, studies indicate that offenders who prefer male victims are likely to have many more victims and are more likely to reoffend after they are caught.

Abuse can happen between the same gender, as was described in the essay “Consequence and Change” (pg. 138-143). The writer describes grooming, telling about a girl who was 4 years older, outgoing, and popular befriending a younger girl on her first day in youth group. The older girl required that the sexual exploration be kept secret and ignored that it was wrong. These behaviors were not identified as abuse in the book.

On the other hand, excellent advice is given on page 124 to teach children to watch out for “now-don’t-you-tell-your-parents-about-this” tone and avoid those children or activities. This is great advice that most children who are old enough to play without close supervision will understand.

One of the best things a parent can do to help their children avoid being abused or being abusive is to model healthy interactions. We need to respect children as we want them to respect others and ourselves. We cannot require them to bare their private areas for discipline, or we are teaching them that their privacy deserves to be violated if they offend someone. Even in discipline, parents must demonstrate the respect that they expect the child to have for others. Parents should maintain a close and loving relationship with their children.

*Protecting Their Purity* contains this advice in various essays. In the essay “Protecting our Daughters”, it says, “You cannot fully see your own children’s needs until you have come to a place of healing and wholeness yourself” (pg. 52). That essay suggests that mom should get counseling and seek healing as necessary. On pg. 25 in a different essay, it comments, “...a son who is close to his mother, and whose mother plants in him a high respect for the sanctity of womanhood, will be very unlikely to take advantage of little girls.”<sup>5</sup>

The book mentioned the need for parents to have a good relationship with their children. In the essay, “Because I Love Her” (pg. 55-96) Karla’s mom talks to her about a baby coming. It also discusses mothers and daughters having a close relationship on pages 51, 52, and 53.

Modesty is a becoming virtue and a biblical instruction given for women, but it does not absolve men of full responsibility for their actions. Jesus addressed lust very directly when he said in Matthew 5, “I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And

5 It is also important that children see their father model the way a woman should be treated. His example is also very important.

if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.”

Jesus places the responsibility for lust directly on the man who is looking and lusting, and it is his own eye that must be cut out, not her dresses that must be more conservatively cut. As parents, we need to teach children to respect and care for others, including giving appropriate privacy, thinking thoughts that are right, and seeing others as people, not sexual objects.

If we teach boys that the girls are responsible for men’s immorality, it gives the men a free pass to hell. When we teach our daughters that their dress, actions, or inaction are the reason for men’s lust, they understand that when they are abused, it is their own fault. This is not a good or biblical teaching. We must do better.

*Protecting Their Purity* speaks repeatedly about clothing and modesty as prevention, from advice to keep dresses down, to telling mom if anyone tries to remove panties. For example, “Have you considered that questionable clothes may whet a boy’s appetite for the female body and motivate him to explore little girls?” (pg. 25). Note that his motivation is the girl’s clothes. This emphasis is reiterated in the very disturbing letter to a daughter, from dad, (pg. 169-176) where extensive advice is given regarding clothing and even hair arrangement to avoid “triggering” men to imagine immorality with her. (also see pages 21, 22, 25, 106, 112, 123, 132 and others.)

Also found in the book, “The woman who does not practice modesty becomes a participant in the sins of the men who lust for her.” (pg 172) To support this statement, the story of King David’s sin with Bathsheba is detailed. But it is explained in a way that is far different than the prophet Nathan described it. Instead of identifying David as the wicked man who took his neighbor’s wife, the writer in the book portrays David as a righteous man, and Bathsheba as the wicked temptress who bears the weight of the sin she caused by bathing where the king could see her.

But the Bible tells us that this was a time of year that “the kings go out to war” and that David had been in bed and got up, and her privacy had been invaded. (see 2 Samuel 11 for those details.) Also, he was the king

and she had to obey him. The blame was not placed where it belongs – directly and firmly on the offender.

It is also important to note that this book is about the protection of children from sexual abuse. Though modesty is a virtue that should be taught, it is not a factor in the prevention of sexual abuse of children. Children are not sexually attractive to a normal adult. For this reason, anyone who advises dressing little girls modestly “to avoid causing men to lust”, reveals that they, and those around them, are not safe people for children to be around.

## **What the church and community should know and learn**

*Content Warning: Explicit definitions of abuse are provided in this section.*

Following best practices cannot prevent an adult from molesting a child though many of these actions can make the child less of an easy target. Doing the right things does not guarantee safety, but it creates fences that help reduce the opportunity for abuse.

Children do not lose their innocence through curiosity or learning. One does not lose innocence or purity by knowing one’s body parts, understanding that babies grow inside the uterus, even recognizing or seeing that babies drink milk from a woman’s breast. All of these are part of learning about and understanding the world.

Furthermore, when a child experiences sexual abuse, it is not that child’s fault. It is the instigator, the abuser, or the adult who bears the blame. A child who has experienced this violation needs a loving, safe adult who they can trust, to talk about what happened knowing that person will not shame or punish them for the abuse. They also need professional help to work through the trauma.

In the essay “Trauma” on pages 27-31, the writer talks about recovery, the need for a safe place to disclose abuse, and avoids placing blame inappropriately. This essay handles the issue the way everyone should.

However, there are several troubling issues in the book. For example, in the essay, “Protecting the Innocent by Someone Who Used to be” (pg. 32-39) the writer relates that after getting caught suggesting that

a cousin play with her with underwear off, she got the hardest spanking in her life (pg. 33). Harsh punishment will not encourage a child to come to his or her parent with questions, concerns, or discomfort. If a parent is concerned about the play that their child is instigating, some investigation and investment in the relationship will likely go further than a punishment in getting to the root of the issue. (Page 22 remarks on the shame and fear of punishment.)

On page 180, the claim is made that “Abused often become abusers”. While it is true that many abusers say they were also abused, the majority of abuse victims do not grow up to abuse others. Even when a child acts out sexually with another child, it may be a result of sexual behavior having been normalized and that child may stop when they realize it is not appropriate. Having been abused is neither an excuse to abuse others nor a cause of it, though children who have experienced abuse do sometimes become predatory themselves, especially when they are not provided with support and informed counseling.

Another concerning essay is found on pages 156-161 where an older adopted child sexually abused his younger siblings. First, the stereotyping of the adopted child as a source of trouble is concerning. Second, we note that these criminal actions were never reported, and the abusive child was not given counseling or other help but was sent to other homes instead.

The only mention that is made of the effects of this trauma on the young children was praying to demolish any “strongholds Satan may try to hold in their lives as a result of this”. There was no mention of counseling, medical care, or other follow up for these children either.

It is important to understand that all adult sexual contact with a child is abuse and is a crime. Exposure of adult genitalia or viewing of a child’s by an adult for sexual gratification is a criminal offense in every state. Fondling or sexual touching is also illegal whether it is done to the child or to the adult, including when it is done between an older child and a younger one.

Penetrative sexual contact, whether vaginal, anal, or oral, is abuse and criminal. A girl’s or boy’s body being penetrated by an adult or even an older child is not primarily sexual but is an act of violence

against that child. Every one of these is criminal, reportable, and adults who know and do not report can be considered complicit.

In the book there is a section discussing three “stages” of abuse. The first stage listed is exposure. In describing exposure, the writer includes the lustful observation of a woman by a man, an adult exposing him or herself to a child, as well as children mutually exposing themselves to fulfill curiosity, or doing it with coercion and mocking. No distinction is made between the sinful but non-criminal lusting and the criminal adult exposure to a child, nor between the inappropriate but age-appropriate curiosity and the abusive coercion.

In stage 2, the author only describes fondling of girls, but the same abuse can be done to boys. No mention is made of children fondling adults or the criminal nature of fondling.

For stage 3, on page 126, the editor of the book states that the Bible calls it fornication “when a girl’s body is penetrated.” The author identifies it as a crime that must be reported (“even the law needs to know,” pg. 127), despite focusing on the sexual nature of the offense rather than recognizing the violence of it.

Other types of abuse are not so clearly dealt with, and some are not even mentioned. (such as oral sex). It is not made clear that penetration may not be vaginal, or that penetration can be done with an object, and could be done by a woman or be done to boys. While the author identifies only penetrative sexual contact as a crime that must be reported, legally, the sexual interaction with children in all three stages is criminal and should be reported.

There are two ways to report abuse. You can call the local law enforcement, and you can call Children’s Services. If a child is in immediate danger, a 911 call to law enforcement is always best practice. If the child is not in immediate danger, then it is best practice to make a call to Children’s Services, followed by a call to law enforcement at their non-emergency number.

When you call to report abuse, you should be as clear and specific about what form the abuse took, who did it, and who it was done to as you are able to be. However, it is not appropriate for a parent or safe adult to ask specific or leading questions of a child who discloses abuse. Do not make guesses. Listen to what

the child says and ask open questions like, “Is there anything more you want to tell me?” Ideally, if a child is interviewed about the abuse, the questioning will be done by a professional trained in working with children in this situation.

While reporting is not mandatory for all adults in every state (please check your state’s requirements), it is the position of A Better Way that reporting is a moral obligation. Sexual abuse of children is not only a sin, but it is a crime. Failure to report allows the abuser to continue to seek out victims and abuse, rather than getting the treatment that they need and being kept away from other possible victims.

## Conclusion

While there are some positive and helpful parts to this book, we do not recommend this book. It lacks teaching regarding boys, and contains incorrect and conflicting information as well as leaving out important information. But the greatest problem with this book is that it has failed to see abuse as God sees it.

Christians need to realize that how a child acts or dresses does not justify or cause anyone to sin, but each person is enticed by his (or her) own evil desires (James 1). Child abuse is caused by the evil choices of the perpetrator of abuse. Childhood curiosity should be handled by appropriate teaching and not punishment.

Until those distinctions are understood, attempts to stop sexual abuse will lack effectiveness. It will result in children being punished and offenders being excused because they were triggered or motivated by the child. This is not acceptable.

There is a better way.

## References

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### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

Compilation of information about child sexual abuse: [https://www.d2l.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/all\\_statistics\\_20150619.pdf](https://www.d2l.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/all_statistics_20150619.pdf)

An article about teaching body part names: <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/using-the-anatomically-correct-terms/>

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