

# Raising Gender Secure Daughters in a Gender Confused World

- I. Our Hope for our Daughters
  - A. Healthy sexual/gender development of daughters is something every parent desires
  - B. Equip her so that she can embrace God's divine design of gender
  - C. Instill within her an appreciation for God's delight in creating her female
  
- II. Why the Need for this Workshop
  - A. Today's world is gender confused
  - B. Goal of radical "social engineers" is to try to convince us that: gender is fluid and changeable; there are many genders; gender is a social construct; gender roles are interchangeable; humans are really androgynous or unisex; and gender is not important in human relationships
  - C. God in His infinite wisdom has created women and men absolutely equal in value and wonderfully different and complementary
  
- III. Understanding the First Stage of Childhood Sexual Development: Ages 0-4<sup>1</sup>
  - A. Begin to teach your daughter what to think about her body so she can cherish what God has given her
  - B. What's normal: questions about gender differences; self-stimulation in public or private (which is not fantasy-based masturbation); conversations about potty training
  - C. Developmental tasks: bonding with Mom; bonding with Dad; identification with same-sex parent; respect for opposite-sex parent
  - D. Things parents should do to foster sexual health:
    - 1. Tell your daughter you love her, *regularly*
    - 2. Be available and be consistent
    - 3. Be kind
    - 4. Have the smallest number of caregivers possible
    - 5. Express enjoyment of your role as a female or male, wife or husband, provider or stay-at-home mother
    - 6. Teach her about God and affirm His love for her
    - 7. Teach God's design for creation, weddings, marriage, babies and families with accompanying joy, awe and reverence
    - 8. Teach basic differences between females and males and through this affirm your daughter's gender
    - 9. Teach age-appropriate self-hygiene to support a sense of modesty and appropriate boundaries
    - 10. Affirm her personhood outside of her gender
  - E. Things parents should avoid doing:
    - 1. Avoid unnecessary immodesty in the home
    - 2. Be extremely careful with what you say and do—little girls' feelings are easily hurt
    - 3. Don't express shock, or shame her, for repeating inappropriate sexual words she may have heard, self-stimulation or asking immature questions
    - 4. Don't expose her to explicit behavior in cartoons, movies, TV or elsewhere in the culture
    - 5. Don't allow older siblings or adults to violate boundaries by tickling without permission, excessive overpowering and/or irritation to the point of provocation
    - 6. Don't force her to hug or kiss people

(For information on understanding the subsequent stages of childhood sexual development, see Rob Jackson's online articles at <http://www.pureintimacy.org/piArticles/A000000588.cfm>. Also see the resources listed under "Additional Help" at the end of the handout.)

- IV. Mother's Involvement in Gender Identity Development<sup>2</sup>
  - A. A daughter's long-term gender identity depends, in a significant way, upon the unique relationship with her mother
  - B. Critically necessary for mother to be warm, nurturing, verbally and physically affectionate toward her daughter so attachment can occur
  - C. Attachment Theory: The first three years of life are vital to everything that will come later
  - D. The daughter's emotional attachment to her mother leads to identification with her, next an acceptance of mother as role model, and finally a connection herself to her female identity
  - E. Reasons why a daughter may not emotionally connect with her mother:<sup>3</sup>
    - 1. A maternal weakness or deficit arising out of the mother's own attachment history and developmental difficulties
    - 2. Accidental or uncontrollable separation, such as death, adoption, major illness or mandatory absences due to the necessity of work
    - 3. A defensive detachment arising out of the daughter's perceptions, sensitivities and immature conclusions and/or beliefs with respect to mother
    - 4. Actual maternal neglect, abuse, abandonment or trauma
  
- V. Father's Involvement in Gender Identity Development<sup>4</sup>
  - A. A daughter's long-term gender identity depends, in a significant way, upon the unique relationship with her father
  - B. His role becomes critically important after her first year because at about 18 months and continuing over next four years, gender identity is formed
  - C. Father is more actively involved in gender identity development than mother
  - D. Father's active role (physically present and emotionally connected) prepares a son for masculinity and a daughter for femininity
  - E. Affection and Leadership are critically necessary—both have strong impact on promoting daughter's healthy gender identification
  
- VI. Roles of Mothering and Fathering<sup>5</sup>
  - A. Mother and father influence their daughter to identify with her own sex by helping her to feel comfortable about being a girl, specifically through helping her to behave femininely
  - B. If daughter is encouraged in feminine behavior, she will gradually take on correct female identity
  - C. Scriptures affirming gender, gender roles and relationships: 1 Corinthians 11; Ephesians 5; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Peter 3:1-7; 1 Thessalonians 4:4-5; 1 Timothy 5:1-2; Luke 11:13; Ephesians 6:4; John 15:12; 1 John 2:10; 1 John 4:10; 1 Peter 2:21-3:1; 1 Timothy 2:9-12 ; 1 Timothy 5:14; Titus 2:3-5
  
- VII. Tomboy Phase: Healthy versus Unhealthy<sup>6</sup>
  - A. Healthy, normal phase for many girls
  - B. For small percentage, masculine behavior is linked to gender identity confusion
  - C. Healthy tomboy may prefer masculine activities as child but nonetheless accepts female identity; usually passes through this phase and becomes more feminine as adolescence begins
  - D. Unhealthy tomboy persists in her masculine behaviors; inflexible, rigid, even compulsive pattern of masculine identification and masculine role adoption
    - 1. Onset of puberty very traumatic: repulsed by breast development and menstruation; despises sexual organs; wishes she could be transformed into a boy
  - E. Childhood behavior patterns associated with high tendency toward gender identity confusion<sup>5</sup>
    - 1. Repeatedly refusing to wear girls' clothes, jewelry, etc. preferring instead to wear boys' clothes

2. Avoids playing with girls' toys, prefers instead to play with boys' toys
3. Avoids play opportunities with other girls and plays primarily with boys
4. Uses masculine gestures and walk
5. Projects her voice to a masculine-like tone and/or predominantly talks about male activities
6. Expresses a desire to be called by a boy's name or nickname
7. Expresses a desire to have a penis
8. Identifies with her father rather than with their mother

#### VIII. What to Do if You're Concerned<sup>7</sup>

##### A. Ask the following questions:

1. What feminine behavior do you observe in your daughter, and how often does each occur?
2. What masculine behavior do you observe in your daughter, and how often does each occur?
3. With whom does your daughter identify? Mother, sister, some other female, father, brother some other male?
4. To what extent does your daughter interact with other girls? What are the ages of each of the girls with whom she relates?
5. To what extent does she interact with boys? What are the ages of each of the boys with whom she relates?
6. What is the history and frequency of each of the following behaviors?  
Cross-dressing, feminine gestures and mannerisms, masculine gestures and mannerisms, plays with girls' toys and activities, plays with boys' toys and activities, avoidance of play with same-sex peers, excessive play with opposite-sex peers, masculine voice inflection, and/or desire to be called by a name of the other sex
7. Does your daughter insist on pretending to be a boy?
8. What is your response to your daughter's masculine behaviors and activities?
9. Ask your daughter to name her friends to determine ratio of female to male playmates
10. Ask your daughter to name her favorite people, places, activities and things and consider the amount of time spent with each
11. Ask your daughter to draw a picture with people in it. Oftentimes, a child struggling with her gender identity will draw a figure of the opposite sex first
12. In a non-accusatory tone, ask your daughter both specific and open-ended questions about how she feels about being a little girl

##### B. Seek help through a qualified and trained individual (Christian clinical child psychologist, psychiatrist or psychotherapist)

- a. Focus on the Family's Counseling Department, 719-531-3400. Ask for the Counseling Department and then if possible, to counsel with Joann Condie
- b. Contact NARTH for a possible therapist in your area, 1-888-364-4744, [www.narth.com](http://www.narth.com),
- c. For teenagers and adults struggling with unwanted same-sex attraction, contact Exodus International, 407-599-6872, [www.exodusinternational.org](http://www.exodusinternational.org)

#### IX. The Theological Significance of Gender

- A. Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7; 2:18-20; 2:21-25. All that was feminine in the nature of God needed human imaging as well
- B. Marriage is the image used in the Bible more than another other to help us understand God's love: Genesis 2; throughout the Old Testament; Ephesians 5:25-33; Revelation 19, 21
- C. God's plan is to live with us in an eternal union of love. He wanted this plan to be so evident

to us that He impressed an image of it in our very being by creating us male and female and calling us to become one flesh

- X. Celebrating What it Means to be Female
  - A. The Fall: Genesis 3
  - B. In the Garden, the enemy of God attacked the woman because woman embodies and represents the call of humanity to be the Bride of Christ
  - C. As women, we were deliberately fashioned by God's hand to be a model of Christ's Bride
  
- XI. Additional Helps
  - A. *Maternal Desire: On Children, Love, and the Inner Life*, Daphne de Marneffe, Ph.D.; *Girl in the Mirror*, Nancy Snyderman; *Prude*, Carol Platt Liebau; *A Return to Modesty* and *Girls Gone Mild*, Wendy Shalit; *Bringing Up Girls*, Dr. James Dobson; *The Wonder of Girls*, Michael Gurian; *Questions Kids Ask About Sex: Honest Answers for Every Age*, Melissa R. Cox and J. Thomas Fitch; *Hooked: New Science on How Casual Sex Is Affecting Our Children*, Drs. Joe McIlhaney and Freda McKissic Bush; *Strong Fathers, Strong Daughters: 10 Secrets Every Father Should Know*, Meg Meeker, M.D.; *Father to Daughter: Life Lessons on*; *Raising a Girl*, Harry H. Harrison; *Always Daddy's Girl*, H. Norman Wright; *Secret Keeper Girl Kit: Eight Great Dates for You and Your Daughter*, Dannah Gresh and Rebecca St. James; *The Female Brain*, Louann Brizendine, M.D.
  - B. American Heritage Girls, [www.ahgonline.org](http://www.ahgonline.org), 513-771-2025

#### Endnotes

1. "Healthy Childhood Sexual Development: Ages 0-4," by Rob Jackson, <http://www.pureintimacy.org/piArticles/A000000586.cfm>
2. *Bringing Up Girls*, Dr. James Dobson
3. *Handbook of Therapy for Unwanted Homosexual Attractions: A Guide to Treatment*, edited by Drs. Julie Harren Hamilton and Philip J. Henry
4. *Bringing Up Girls*, Dr. James Dobson and *Strong Fathers, Strong Daughters*, Meg Meeker, M.D.
5. Ibid
6. *Handbook of Therapy for Unwanted Homosexual Attractions: A Guide to Treatment*, edited by Drs. Julie Harren Hamilton and Philip J. Henry
7. Ibid

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