

## **Protecting Your Child** **By Tim Swanson**

Protecting your child is one of your most important responsibilities. Here are a few ways that many children get hurt.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Children can be sexually abused by other children in the neighborhood, by older children, by relatives or neighbors. How will you protect your child from being sexually abused? Here are some ways:

1. Talk to your child about how his private areas are not places not to be touched by others.
2. Teach your child to have good self-esteem. Practice how to shout no and run away.
3. Some people touch boys' private areas as a joke. It is not a joke. Tell your child to report to you if this happens. Immediately, go confront the sexual abuser and tell them that it is not a joke. It is sexual abuse.
4. Do not allow anyone to touch your child on his bottom or private areas. If that happens, immediately deal with the issue. Talk to your child and say that you are sorry that happened and that it was wrong. Take the steps to make it stop. Don't be afraid to tell the other person that it is not okay to touch your child. If it is another child, talk to his parent to make it stop. Don't allow your child to be with that person unsupervised. Always report rape and sexual abuse to the police. Don't be afraid.
5. Always know where your child is. If he is out playing for a while, ask him where he went and who he was with. Ask if anything strange happened today. Watch for unusual behavior in your child, like fear, guilt, shame, or urinating in his clothes.
6. Don't let your child spend the night with people who you do not 100% trust.
7. Be careful about letting your child go into other people's houses.
8. Many children see pornography at a friend's house. Talk openly with your child about avoiding pornography. If they see it, they need to leave and tell you immediately.
9. Watch for adults and youth who prepare your child for future sexual abuse. They start by giving special attention to your child. Hugs and touch slowly become sexual. Don't allow your child to give or receive backrubs to older teens or adults who are not their parents. Watch out for people who give unusual special attention to your child.

### **Protecting Your Child from Demons**

There are ways that you can invite demons to attach to your child. Be careful to avoid those situations.

1. Horror movies and movies about witches, demons, or spells. You need to stop your child from seeing these images. If you are at a restaurant, cover your child's eyes and ears, and ask the manager to turn off the TV.

2. Pornography: Be very careful about what your child looks at on the internet, Youtube, or on a friend's phone. Talk with him and ask him if he has seen anything. Be open with him about not looking at naughty pictures.
3. Meditation and Natural Healers: Do not take your child to a healer or allow your child to do spiritual meditation or do yoga. You are inviting spirits to come to your child when you take your child to a natural healer. The healer might say that he is talking to Jesus Christ or to the Lord. This is a different Jesus Christ and a different Lord.
4. Name switching: In some cultures, it is common to sell your crying baby to a neighbor and change his name. This is believed to stop the crying and it does for many. This is a demonic practice. Do not do it. If you have, repent and renounce that action. Also, give your child his own name. Don't call him by the name of a dead child. He has his own identity and should not try to live the identity of the dead child.
5. Sexual Abuse: Make it your number one priority to know where your child is and what he is doing. Openly communicate with your child, so you know if something has been done to him.
6. Your Rebellious Sins: Your child can become like a mirror of you. Do you want a child who is targeted by a spirit of anger, depression, lust, or suicide? Of course not! Get help for yourself. Don't pass on your sin to your child.
7. Religious Amulets and Good Luck Charms: Don't use charms, dream catchers, or amulets. Destroy all religious statues and evil artifacts. Trust only in God.
8. Religious Festivals: Religious festivals that include drinking, gambling, and worshiping other gods are not spiritually healthy for your child. Don't let him go there.
9. Video games that are violent or where spirits help the player.

### **Sexual Identity**

You can build or break your child's sexual identity. Protecting your child's sexual identity can be complicated, but here are some points to consider.

1. Teach your child his identity as a child of God. A person's sexual identity is tied to his understanding of his purpose and identity as a child of God.
2. Be present in your child's life. This means that you need to spend time with him on a daily basis. Don't leave him to go work in another city. Don't have him go live with his aunt or grandma, while you live somewhere else. Both parents need to be living with your child, and spending time with him daily.
3. Speak life into your child, especially affirm his sexuality. Don't call him names that mock him. If you have a girl, don't call her a tomboy. If you have a boy, don't call him a sissy. Affirm his qualities as a boy or affirm her qualities as a girl. Dress your boy like a boy and your girl like a girl, even as a baby. For example, if you wanted a girl, but God gave you a boy, love your boy as a boy. Be content with God's choice.

4. Do your job as a parent! Be there for your child and give him love. Both mom and dad need to give time, attention, and love to your child daily. Don't desert your child for a job or start another family somewhere else.
5. Protect him from sexual abuse and pornography.
6. Sometimes, families will pick on a child who is not strong in his sexual identity. They will bully that child, physically abuse him, and mock him. Your job is to make sure that this never happens to your child.
7. Bullying: Your child can be bullied physically and emotionally. Communicate with your child to know if this happens. Stop it from happening. Talk to the adults involved. If it continues, take your child out of the place where it is happening.

You have the ability to shape your child's sexual identity into a god-honoring person who lives out God's plan for him. Make this a significant priority for your parenting.

### **Protecting by Blessing**

Speak words of affirmation, blessing and life over your child often. Tell him how proud you are of his spiritual and physical growth. Teach him about his identity in Christ and his value in God's eyes. Don't be shy about this. Often, encourage your child by telling him the talents and gifts that you see God developing in him. As a parent, you have plenty of words of correction. You are often instructing him on his behavior and giving him corrective feedback. Be intentional about giving your child positive feedback. Pray blessings over him. Speak blessings over him. Tell him specific ways that you see God working in his life.

**Death and life are in the power of the tongue. Proverbs 18:21a.** You have the power to curse or bless your child with your words. When you criticize your child or tell him he is stupid or worthless, you wound him and those wounds can infect him until the day he dies. Be very careful with your words because you can either speak life or death into your child's soul. Of course, you will make mistakes. Confess your sin to your child and ask him for forgiveness. Then, focus on being truthful and speak life. **There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise promotes health. Proverbs 12:18**

### **Spiritual Warfare**

1. Pray over your child often and pray for God's protection. Teach your child to pray. Worship together.
2. Read your Bible at least 30 minutes a day and pray for your family. Reading a devotional is not enough preparation for battle. You need to read and study the word. Teach your child how to read the Bible.
3. Don't allow evil spirits to come into your house or target your family. Submit to God and resist them. In the name of Jesus Christ, send them away.