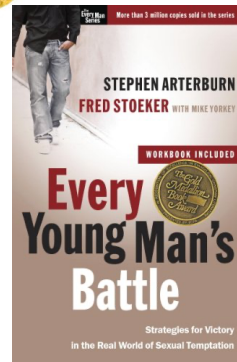




BARE MARRIAGE

HEALTHY, EVIDENCE-BASED, BIBLICAL ADVICE FOR SEX & MARRIAGE

with Sheila Wray Gregoire



Every Young Man's Battle

Stephen Arterburn and Fred Stoeker

SYNOPSIS

Aimed at teen boys to address lust: "You're a sexual being and deserve to know what's right and true about your sexuality so you can have the greatest chance possible for a fantastic sexual relationship with the person you marry." (p. 1).

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

- Every Young Man's Battle is gratuitously graphic. It tells boys that to defeat lust they must avoid all sexual material, but then gives salacious descriptions of porn, oral sex ("paradise", p. 31), masturbation, and much more.
- Objectifies girls and women ("any bouncing breasts that mosey by", p. 142), failing to recognize that the root of lust is not maleness ("we got there naturally, simply by being male", p. 55) but inability to see women as whole people.
- Bulldozes over consent, portraying date rape situations as normal dating interactions, while ignoring girls' experiences.
- Paints a route to lust recovery that is will-power based that has been shown to create hyper-vigilance and shame.
- Written by a team with no expertise in this area other than the fact that they are self-proclaimed former sex addicts.

EVERY YOUNG MAN'S BATTLE IS OVERLY AND GRATUITOUSLY EXPLICIT AND TITILLATING

- Desensitizes readers to graphic sexual content in the very first pages of the book, including, "Diana Ross poured a bucket of ice on her boss's belly just as he orgasmed, which seemed to intensify the experience" (p. 8); and graphic descriptions of the non-consensual porn one of the authors prefers.
- Includes many graphic descriptions of masturbation and past sexual exploits; the joys of receiving oral sex; the content of their favorite porn and what turns them on. Just one of hundreds of examples: "When some hot-looking babe in a French bikini walks by your beach towel, your eyes have the habit of locking on her, sliding up and down. When the cheerleader with the biggest breasts walks past you in the hall, your eyes run away with her. When the Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue arrives in your mailbox every February, you fantasize over the curves and crevices..." (p. 141).
- While insisting porn is bad, describes in detail how to find porn-like images elsewhere—beach volleyball; department store catalogs; lingerie ads; even exercise videos: "John wakes up early to watch those morning exercise shows: 'I feel absolutely compelled to watch, to catch the closeups of the buttocks, breasts, especially the inner thighs.'" (p. 37)

EVERY YOUNG MAN'S BATTLE OBJECTIFIES GIRLS AND DISCOUNTS THEIR EXPERIENCE

- Features graphic sexual descriptions of females: "full-breasted woman in a teensy-weensy bikini" (p. 147); "full-busted sweaters, and the hot-looking babes who wear them (p. 51). Nicknames a minor girl Betty Jo "BJ" Blowers because she gives oral sex (p. 29). References "any bouncing breasts that mosey by" (p. 142), as if girls are disembodied breasts.
- Ignores girls' agency and experience. Suggests you should treat a girl with respect to honor her father rather than to honor her (p. 202). Describes pressuring a former girlfriend into an abortion, but focuses on the pain this caused him rather than what he did to her. Never mentions the effects on girls of being masturbated to or lusted after.

EVERY YOUNG MAN'S BATTLE NORMALIZES COERCION AND CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR

- Describes abusive and/or criminal behavior as part of "normal" male sexuality, including: indecent exposure, such as masturbating in a car in front of the school (pp. 64, 153), coercion and sexual assault (pp. 211, 213), statutory rape (p. 31), non-consensual and fetishized porn (p. 32) None of this is called criminal or even abusive.

- Normalizes sexual harassment, including cat-calling (p. 160); masturbating to images of classmates (especially scary in the age of sexting) (p. 191); rubbing genitals against girls (p. 108).
- Has multiple references to “pushing past her boundaries” (p. 210), without noting that pushing past a girl’s “no” is coercion and constitutes sexual assault. Never mentions the crucial concept of consent.
- Describes marital sex as a husband “taking” from the wife, portraying even good sex as inherently predatory (p. 103).

EVERY YOUNG MAN’S BATTLE CAN MAKE THE PROBLEMS WITH SEXUAL SIN WORSE

- Rather than addressing the attachment issues or childhood trauma at the heart of much sexual compulsion, paints victory as merely a matter of will-power, which, readers are assured, will take just six weeks (p. 142).
- Fails to mention that boys can be victims of child sexual abuse, ignoring the role trauma plays in sexual compulsions. States that men commit “100% of rapes” (p. 55), ignoring that adult women and female peers can victimize boys too.
- Advocates boys “bounce their eyes” from women (p. 148). However, this still frames girls as objects to avoid. Avoiding females can create lust problems by seeing girls and women as “the other” rather than as full, whole, real people. Also, studies have found that attempted suppression of sexual thoughts increases the intensity and frequency of those thoughts (see Yanav Efrati, 2018). Hypervigilance makes the problem worse without dealing with the root.
- Frames normal sexual feelings as sin: Not finding one’s relationship with God as tantalizing as her breasts (p. 77); getting an erection from a “hot movie scene” (p. 59).
- Misrepresents intimacy, showing no understanding of the value of emotional vulnerability in relationship, and instead insists that women want emotions while men do not. Paints boys and men as not being fully realized humans (p. 212).

WHAT READERS HAVE SAID

- **Peter, Amazon Reviewer:** “My parents made me read this book when I was in high school. It gave me deep shame surrounding all aspects of sexuality and negatively affected my relationships for most of my 20s. I’m only recently overcoming intimacy issues 15 years later...Shaming boys for having normal human urges will not do them any good.”
- **NT, Male Amazon Reviewer:** “My father and I went through this book...I was not convicted about purity at the time, and this book was so graphic in the stories about sexual temptation, sexual activities, and pornography that it made me more curious about naked women, sex, and even introduced me to masturbation. The author literally describes how to masturbate in detail. This book is a huge stumbling block for teens and will only awaken/fuel lust within them.”
- **Jonathan, Facebook Commenter:** “It made me hyper-vigilant and anxious and turned what could have been a healthy exploration of sexuality, personal values, and responsibilities into a war with myself where failure led to shame spirals which led to more failure. The concept of bouncing my eyes in particular turned check-out lines into nightmares.”
- **Criminal Attorney:** “This book is simply no respite from the endless drumbeat of depraved sexuality in culture, and it is a disgusting and gratuitous sexuality at that. Did the author need to tell us how he learned about masturbation? And how to do it? Including lubricant? Did the author need to burden us by telling us by name who his favorite centerfold was?...Mothers, and even fathers, may think that this is the 'strong medicine' that needs to be administered to sons who are caught up in pornography or sexual activity. It is not...This book is poison and irredeemable and seriously risks titillating an already lustful mind through its descriptions of furtive sexual acts...And this review is coming from a criminal defense attorney who has sat through days of graphic courtroom testimony about sex with minors.”

SYNOPSIS OF FINDINGS

While teaching boys about healthy sexuality and avoiding getting lured into pornography is a laudable and important goal, this book misses the mark completely. Its graphic descriptions of porn, masturbation, and illicit behavior can actually create the very problems it’s trying to prevent by putting ideas in boys’ minds that are hard to erase. Fails to note that the root of lust is the objectification of women, instead continuing to objectify in their road to recovery. Presents a strategy of lust prevention that has been found to intensify hyper-vigilance while creating cycles of shame that feed lust issues.

INSTEAD OF EVERY YOUNG MAN’S BATTLE, CHOOSE...



Nontoxic Masculinity (Zach Wagner), for older boys

The Whole Story (talking to your kids about sex & puberty) course at BareMarriage.com/the-whole-story