



God's
Plan
for You

Life, Love,
Marriage & Sex

DAVID HAJDUK

“In a world that bombards all of us, and particularly young people, with deceptive and confusing messages about the gift of our sexuality, David has put together an indispensable resource. His humor and personality shine through even as he deals with difficult topics, and the message is right on the money. He has brought both *The Theology of the body* and Church teaching in the *Catechism* into clear focus and everyday language. I am inspired by this book, knowing the power that it has to change lives.”

— Steve Angrisano
Youth minister, singer, and songwriter

God's Plan for You

Life, Love, Marriage & Sex

SECOND EDITION

By David Hajduk

Foreword to the Second Edition by Sr. Helena Burns, FSP



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*For my father,
the “man behind the man,”
who by his words and example has taught me
what it means to love as God loves.*

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FOREWORD TO THE SECOND EDITION

It isn't easy being in your teens. You couldn't pay me enough to relive those years. But I not only survived, I thrived. Why? Because, God. I got to know God when I was fifteen (I didn't really believe in God before then). Knowing God meant that my world got a whole lot bigger. I got to be part of something bigger than just my little self and my little world with all my problems that seemed so overwhelming at the time. And best of all, I came to understand that God **LOVES** me and that this earth isn't all there is. God is waiting for me in heaven, and he's more excited for me to go there and be with him than I am.

So what does knowing God have to do with *your* life? Everything. You came from God (who is Love) and are going back to God (who is Love), and life is short. It's illogical to try to live our lives without God (or basically just ignoring God, which is called "practical atheism"). It doesn't make sense not to let God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier into our lives: the only One who can truly help us, who'll always be there for us, who never gives up on us.

“Theology of the Body” is a primary, indispensable way to get to know God—through our own bodies. If we are made “in the image of God,” then our bodies are theology textbooks. Did you, perhaps, think it was only your *soul* that was made in the image of God? Nope. We are one person: body and soul. We can’t have only one part of us made in the image of God. In fact, an “image” is something you can *see*. Can you see your soul? No. Can you see your body? Yes. *Boom*. We need to learn to read and hear “the language of the body” to understand who we are and what the meaning of our life is.

If we don’t know who we are, we’ll spend our lives searching for our identity, online and offline. Satan always offers us false identities. It’s what he does (identity theft). Starting in the Garden of Eden, he told Adam and Eve that they were *not* beloved children of God, that there were *not* like God, that God was *not* good. Satan was telling them to trust *him* instead of God.

Probably all our lives we’ve heard: “We’re all children of God!” Even people with very little faith usually have a sense of that and can agree with that. BUT—who teaches us to *grow up in God*, to become *men and women of God*? We may have had faith in God when we were little, but then puberty hits. Whoa. Suddenly we have all kinds of new feelings, and not just sexual urges. We also begin to feel a deep ache, a deep longing to love and be loved at our deepest levels. And who the heck is helping us with *that*?

So often it’s at puberty that we may begin to drift away from God because our childish faith no longer

matches our new reality. But this shouldn't be! It's our capacity to know and to love that makes us *most* like God, and this is expressed in a profound way through our sexuality. As we mature, we grow in our ability to participate in God's love and life in a new, fuller, and mature way. At the time in our lives when we most need God, we may tend to think he only loved us when we were little kids and didn't have all kinds of sexual feelings, problems, and weren't making sexual mistakes. Nothing could be further from the truth. Because this ache, this longing, is not only for another person who will love us for a lifetime. We are longing for Ultimate Love, for God, who will love us forever. God doesn't just love part of us! He loves us with all our sexual hang-ups, and he wants to help us navigate them so that they can even become a way of sharing in his love and his life—so that the body will reveal all of its beauty to us. When we try to “use” beauty for our own selfish gratification, it hides its secrets, because beauty can't be used.

Theology of the body is all about teaching us how to grow up *in* God and toward God—not away from God—to the “full stature of Christ” (Eph 4:13). God wants to talk to you, face to face, as the amazing adult man or woman you're becoming: “Come now, and let us reason together” (Is 1:18). You are precious to him.

Our culture hasn't given up on love, sex, beauty, the body, or relationships. But do you think the culture knows what all these things really are, really mean, and how to best live them? You can be the generation that

turns a “culture of death” into a culture of life, love, and beauty.

Theology of the body isn’t about what you *can’t* have, it’s about what you *can* have. Theology of the body isn’t a bunch of *external* requirements imposed on us from the outside. It’s about what the *internal* requirements of true love and true sex challenge us to, *if* we want to get the most out of them.

Theology of the body is not a bunch of rules. Theology of the body doesn’t say: “*Do* this, don’t *do* that.” It says: “This is who you *are*. Now go forth and *live* it.” And don’t forget, God loves you. He is for you, not against you. He’s on your side, in your corner. Deal with it.

SR. HELENA BURNS, FSP¹

FOREWORD TO THE FIRST EDITION

Saint John Paul II changed my life.

When I first heard of his theology of the body, I was a senior in college and a “nice Catholic girl.” By that, I mean that I went to Mass on Sunday and tried to avoid committing the really big sins. I followed the rules because I knew they were the rules. I have to admit, I wasn’t entirely sure *why* they were the rules, or why I was supposed to follow them. I knew I wasn’t supposed to steal or kill because that hurt people. And I abstained from sexual activity because I didn’t want to get pregnant and didn’t want to make God mad.

Compelling, but not particularly positive reasons.

All of that changed when a series of four speakers came in to talk to us about John Paul II and the theology of the body. I was completely blown away. I saw “the rules” in a whole new light. God’s laws—his morality—are about *love!* He has a plan for our lives and for our bodies. When he says “Thou shalt not . . .” it’s because if we “shalt,” we’ll end up hurting ourselves and hurting our ability to love.

I saw in particular how the Catholic Church's teaching on human sexuality was based on love. We're created for love. We hunger for love. And we think somehow that "making love" will help us to live love.

It doesn't work that way. Living God's plan—chastity—helps us find and live love.

I thought this news was so exciting, I decided I wanted to share it with teenagers. I've been doing that full time ever since.

Saint John Paul II had an amazing gift for conveying the truths of our faith in a beautiful, positive way. He made Christ's love so real and so immediate that rules didn't seem like rules anymore. They are simply a natural response to God's overwhelming love for us.

From the very beginning of my work with teens and chastity, everything I've said or written has been based on the theology of the body. I didn't go out of my way to advertise that fact in the early years of my ministry, because the word "theology" freaked people out. But Saint John Paul II changed even that. Now the theology of the body is actually "cool." People are excited about it; they want to learn about it.

Fortunately, you have an excellent opportunity to do just that. David Hajduk shares my enthusiasm for the work of Saint John Paul II, and he has captured the Holy Father's message in the book you hold in your hands. Take full advantage of this opportunity. Read it. Re-read it. Think about it. Pray to understand it on a deeper and deeper level.

Saint John Paul II's signature phrase was "Be not afraid." I want you to remember that as you read this book. God is madly in love with you. He wants what is best for you. Most of all, God wants to have a relationship with you. He wants you to share eternal happiness with him in heaven.

God is on your side. And that, my friends, is very, very good news.

Read on . . .

MARY BETH BONACCI

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My children, who showed so much excitement about their daddy writing a book, even though it meant days when I may have seemed to spend more time with the computer than with them.

My parents, for always believing that I could accomplish great things if I worked hard, and for being unwavering in their thinking that I'm the best thing since sliced bread.

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And to Saint John Paul II for all he has taught me.



CHAPTER 1

THE COSMIC PREQUEL

Some Pharisees approached him, and tested him, saying, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause whatever?” He said in reply, “Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human being must separate.”

—Matthew 19:3–6 NAB

GOD’S PLAN FOR YOU FROM THE BEGINNING

The first *Star Wars* movie (Episode IV that is) came out when I was in the first grade, and I eagerly awaited each subsequent episode. My father and I would stand in lines that wrapped around the movie theater and continued for blocks. I had every action figure, as well

as the Darth Vader carrying case. I had all the space-ships. I traded *Star Wars* cards. You get the picture.

So in 1999, when George Lucas began coming out with the prequels, “the story behind the story,” I was pumped up beyond your wildest imagination. I immediately changed from a thirty-year-old man back into a seven-year-old boy, and all was right with the world. My kids instantly morphed into *Star Wars* junkies. The hours spent jumping around the living room recreating the lightsaber “dual of the fates” between Darth Maul, Qui-Gon Jinn, and Obi-wan Kenobi will be forever etched in our memories. And with the force having been reawakened with the new films, you can only imagine the craze that has overtaken our house once again!

I realize there are a lot of strong opinions out there about the Star Wars prequels, but for me they really helped to shed light on the original three movies. Let’s just say that, watching them, I experienced my share of “a-ha” moments: moments when a light bulb went on in my head and I suddenly realized something I hadn’t before. Well, when Jesus refers the Pharisees back to “the beginning,” to the time when God created human beings and the first human couple, you might say he is reminding them about their “prequel,” about the story behind their story. And since their prequel is everybody’s prequel—including yours and mine—you could call it *The Cosmic Prequel*.

Why would Jesus want to take the Pharisees and us back to the beginning and remind us of the story behind our story? Because Jesus wants us to understand what

our lives are really all about. He wants us to know God's plan for us, and he wants us to see how the amazing gifts of love, marriage, and sex are all part of that plan! I really do believe that Jesus hoped (and still hopes) that doing so would give us some serious "a-ha" moments.

WORD TO THE WISE

Pontificate is a fancy word meaning the Holy Father's time as pope.

Saint John Paul II hoped so too! That's why, at the beginning of his pontificate, he devoted over five years' worth of general audience teachings to *The Cosmic Prequel* and how it sheds light on love, marriage, and sex. This teaching eventually became known as the **theology of the body**

(TOB). In it, he stresses the goodness of the body and how a proper understanding of the body enables us to know what it means to be human and what human sexuality is all about. This brings me to the book you have in your hands.

Did U Know

The custom of the general audience, a weekly teaching given by the Holy Father, was started by Pope Pius IX in the 1870s.

THE MEANING OF LIFE, LOVE, MARRIAGE, AND SEX, AND THE POPE FROM POLAND

Have you ever wondered what life is all about? Have you ever struggled with finding your place in this world? Have you ever looked in a mirror and been unsure if you

like what you see, or even *know* what you see? Have you ever been confused about relationships, sex, or members of the opposite sex? Have you become disillusioned over marriage and family life? Well, you're not alone. When I was a teen, I did my share of questioning, and in my years working with teens I have never met one who hasn't wrestled with these issues on some level.

The teenage years can be difficult, and even more so today. Enormous pressure, high expectations, and an uncertain future with slender job prospects all can be the source of anxiety. We supposedly live in the Information Age, but we're fed so much contradictory information that it's hard to know what to believe about anything.

Then there are those guy-girl relationships. As far as sex goes, who knows what to think anymore? Society seems to treat sex in a very casual way, almost recreationally, and we are encouraged daily to view others (and ourselves) in terms of sexual desirability. Struggles persist with body image, Internet pornography, drug and alcohol use, date rape, sexually transmitted infections, and abortion, though society offers little in terms of concrete solutions to such problems. As the divorce rate continues to increase, many teens look at their own broken families and ask, "Is this the best I can hope for?" More and more young adults are even opting not to marry at all. Disillusionment and regret grow, though we are told we shouldn't have either. All things considered, it's not a very happy or hopeful outlook.

And these elements of modern society can make the message coming from the Church even more

counter-cultural, and perhaps incomprehensible, to young people. You may ask yourself: How could an old Polish man who lived in the Vatican for over twenty-six years possibly have known anything about your life, your struggles, your hopes, dreams, or fears? Yet he did. It may surprise you to learn that, as a young man, Saint John Paul II dreamed of becoming a famous actor in the theater. As a young priest, he worked with youth and spent lots of time with them, taking them on canoeing, hiking, and skiing trips (he used to be quite an avid skier). As pope, John Paul II loved to meet with young people from all over the globe at the World Youth Day celebrations every two years. He really did love young people. He really did understand your challenges. And from heaven he really wants *you* to live life to the full and not to fear the future.

In his theology of the body (TOB), Saint John Paul II has provided us with the secret to a full life and a reason



NOTABLE QUOTABLE

You are young, and the Pope is old; 82 or 83 years of life is not the same as 22 or 23, but the Pope still fully identifies with your hopes and aspirations. Although I have lived through much darkness, under harsh totalitarian regimes, I have seen enough evidence to be unshakably convinced that no difficulty, no fear is so great that it can completely suffocate the hope that springs eternal in the hearts of the young. You, the young, are our hope. Do not let that hope die! Stake your lives on it!

—Saint John Paul II

to hope for the future. In TOB we find the purpose of our existence and the answers to our most deeply held questions about life, relationships, and sexuality. And it really is some of the most powerful, uplifting, and downright mind-blowing stuff on earth! The TOB exposes as shallow and bogus what a consumerist or purely secular society holds up to us as the “ideal.” I only wish that I had learned about it before my mid-twenties. It would have spared me a lot of confusion, pain, and bad choices. That’s why I want to introduce it to you. That’s precisely why I wrote this book.

HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM THIS BOOK

In the following pages, I have broken the theology of the body down into bite-sized portions. Each chapter begins with an important insight from God’s word as the “springboard” for that chapter’s theme. Please read it slowly and prayerfully. Then, I offer an introductory example or analogy and present one piece of *The Cosmic Prequel* and what it teaches us about the meaning of life, love, marriage, and sex. Each chapter ends with an “In His Own Words” section containing a quote from Saint John Paul II on that chapter’s topic; a “Things to Ponder and Share” section with questions that will help you relate the themes discussed in the chapter to your everyday life; and some suggested reading from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* to help you to “go deeper” if you so choose. All in all, I have written the book like I speak in the hopes that it

will read less like a textbook and more like a conversation with a friend.

So, let's take a look at *The Cosmic Prequel*—the story behind our story. Those “a-ha” moments are waiting for us.



JOHN PAUL II

In His Own Words

Those who seek the fulfillment of their own human and Christian vocation in marriage are called first of all to make of this “theology of the body” . . . the content of their lives and behavior.

(TOB 23:5)

THINGS TO PONDER AND SHARE

1. Understanding “the story behind our story” helps us to understand and appreciate our story. Have you ever wondered about your family history: where your relatives came from and when, what perhaps earlier generations did when they got to this country, etc.? Ask your parents or grandparents

about it the next time you get a chance. You'll be fascinated by the stories!

2. What are the reasons Jesus takes the Pharisees (and us) back to "the beginning"?
3. What pressures face teens today? How do you cope with them?
4. What is the prevalent attitude in society toward relationships, sex, and marriage? What are some subtle and not so subtle examples that demonstrate it?
5. What is the role of the Pope? Have you ever imagined any of the popes caring for you personally? Why or why not?
6. What are some of the questions you or other young people today might have about love, marriage, and sex? What do you hope to gain from reading this book?

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