



*A Resource and Family Ceremony to Help Teens  
Make Right Choices about Sex and Purity*

**Objective**

To help parents engage in conversations about sex and purity with their teen and create a meaningful experience that challenges their student to save sexual intimacy for marriage.



### **About This Resource**

Sexual messages—often the wrong ones—are widely communicated in our world. Now more than ever, parents have the privilege and responsibility to be the primary teachers and shapers of their student's sexual values. How can parents help their students to navigate the turbulent waters of adolescent sexuality and follow God's ideal of preserving sexual intimacy for marriage? This resource helps parents go beyond simply hoping that their teenager will choose to wait until marriage before engaging in sex, to equipping parents to have frank conversations about sex, and ultimately to call their teenager to commit in front of their family and friends to a life of purity.

### **Introduction**

Silence is not golden for Christian parents when it comes to teaching healthy and responsible attitudes about sexuality to their teenager. Young people must be taught about sexuality on an ongoing basis as they grow. The need for sharing age-appropriate information on sexuality is extremely vital if students are to experience normal, healthy development. Parents who abdicate this serious and important responsibility miss important opportunities that may leave their teenager with moral development gaps and emotional and physical pain. In worst cases, the unfortunate toll may even be physical and/or spiritual death. To pass on healthy and responsible attitudes about sexuality to their teenager, as a parent you must grasp the profound significance that God attaches to this important aspect of human nature and come to grips with your own sexuality, resolving any personal struggles you have in speaking about this topic with your developing student.

### **Desiring Sexual Purity for Our Students**

Today's statistics show that young people have sex at higher rates and at earlier ages than ever before. As a pastor and I am sure that as a parent, you are conscious of the need to help your student enter adolescence with an intentional commitment to deferring sexual intimacy until marriage. It is important to remember that, throughout history, rituals have always played an important part among various cultures and peoples to signal the transition from childhood to adolescence. One way to encourage a commitment to purity, is to create your very own "rite of passage" for your student to experience that challenges them to handle their sexuality in a manner that is pleasing to God, and that sets them up for success in their marriage.

The *True Love Waits* movement was started a few years ago by Christians with a burning desire to create these "rites of passage" to adulthood that challenged students to remain pure and honor God with their sexuality. These experiences have proven to be very powerful for many people, including myself, but I can't help but think of how much more meaningful it would have been as a teenager for this to be a unique experience done with my family and friends present.

In the spirit of *True Love Waits*, I want to challenge you to create such an experience for your teenager, if they are ready to make such a commitment. This ceremony should be preceded with discussion about the importance of purity in our lives as Christ followers. The next section of this resource will provide some resources to help you connect with your teenager and discuss sex, and God's view of it.

When we talk about sexual purity this is what we mean:

- Sex is designed and created by God.
- Sex is God's gift to one man and one woman, and should be experienced within the context of marriage only.
- Sexual purity is moving from asking how close to the line of "sex" without crossing it, to asking, how close can I get to God, that I don't have to worry about crossing the line.

Many of us are very nervous when it comes to talking to our teenager about sex. Here are some thoughts to help you move past your fears of discussing this subject:

- *The best place for a teenager to learn about sexuality is at home from those who care most about him.* Anyone can teach the basic facts about reproduction in an hour or two (or they can be read in any of several reference books), but you are in the best position to put this information in the proper context and give it the right perspective over a period of years. There are no cut-and-dried formulas for carrying out this assignment, but keep the following principles in mind:
  - a. **Giving your student facts about sex, including details on intercourse, does not rob them of their innocence.** Innocence is a function of attitude, not information. A teenager who understands the specifics of sex, while seeing it as an act that, when experienced in the proper biblical context, both expresses love and begins new life, retains their innocence. But a student who knows very little about sex can already have a corrupt mind-set if they have been exposed to it in a degrading, mocking or abusive context.
  - b. **If you feel squeamish or inhibited about discussing this subject with your student, reflect for a moment about your own attitudes toward sex.** Do you harbor any feelings that sexual activity, even within the context of marriage, is somehow shameful or something that God really doesn't approve of? If you realize that this is an issue for you, some conversations with a pastor, trusted friend, a counselor or a combination of these may be in order. Hopefully these discussions, and perhaps a reading of the Song of Solomon and other Bible passages, will alleviate any uneasiness you might harbor regarding God's attitude toward sexuality. Books that are reliable, informative and honoring to sex, marriage and the Creator of both can also be very helpful. Three really good examples are [\*Sexperiment\*](#) by Ed Young Jr., [\*The Gift of Sex: A Guide to Sexual Fulfillment\*](#) by Dr. Clifford and Joyce Penner, and [\*Intended for Pleasure\*](#) by Dr. Ed and Gaye Wheat. But for many people uneasiness about sex may be rooted in life experiences, especially if they involve sexual abuse experienced during childhood, adolescence or even adulthood. It is never too late to address such issues with an individual who has training and experience in this area and can help you work toward healing. If you need help in this area, please don't hesitate for one moment to contact our student office, and let us help direct you to someone who can help you process through this.
  - c. **Don't wait to tell your student everything you know about sex during a single, intense marathon session.** Doing so risks either waiting until it's too late or dumping more in the student's lap than he or she can process. Instead, information should be released gradually during many conversations over a

period of several years. (The same principle applies to any other area of life — faith, values, responsibilities, relationships, handling money and so on — in which you intend to offer guidance to your teenager. These subjects are too important to be confined to a single conversation.) If you have not started these conversations, don't feel that it's too late. It's never too late to start looking at the word, and discovering what God has to say about sex. Don't let fear keep you from starting these conversations.

- d. **In many instances, you will be giving information on a need-to-know basis.** Your five-year-old is probably going to want to know how the baby inside Aunt Susie is going to get out. But your child may not think to ask how the baby got there, and you don't need to introduce the subject at that time. On the other hand, if you haven't yet had any discussions about sex with your ten-year-old, you will need to take the initiative to start some conversations. More than likely they have already heard all sorts of things in their schools with friends, and they need to hear from a more reputable and mature source that understands what God has to say about sex.
- e. **What if your student asks you questions that you can't answer?** Be honest, and then do some research. You gain far more favor in your student's eyes by showing candor than by bluffing. You may not have a detailed knowledge of the intricacies of the menstrual cycle or the developmental stages of puberty, but you're never too old to learn. You can always contact our student office for help in this area, or to gain further resources to answer their questions.
- f. **What if my student asks about my past?** Let's be honest, most of us have some activity in our past that we are not proud of, that if our teenagers hear about we fear it would negate our desire for them to pursue purity even though we did not. The reality is that we all, including your own teen, will make mistakes. The trick is learning from those mistakes, and allowing God to use them to make us who we need to be. Don't be afraid to share your own experience in this area. If you experienced pain because of a lack of commitment to pursue purity, your experience might push your teen towards purity, you never know! My advice is to pray and ask God to guide you in what to say and what not to say.

One of the most difficult issues in talking about sex and purity with your teenager is trying to start the conversation. Here are some great ideas for starting conversation with your teenager about sexual purity.

- Identify some basic discussion starters for the in-the-car times and other chances to talk with your teen. For example, ask your teen if she or she agrees or disagrees with the following statements:
  - There is no problem with having sex with someone you plan to marry.
  - The movies, magazines, Web sites, and books you consume can directly affect your sexual purity.
  - Everyone is having sex.
  - Can having sex negatively impact you?
  - How far is too far?
  - Sexual purity is God's plan for your life.

- Sexual purity applies to both single and married people.
- Decide to do a research project on sex. You and your teen can research as a family what the Bible says about sex, or on other topics related to sex. For example:
  - What does the Bible say about purity?
  - What are the consequences (parent and student) if we fail to live sexually pure lives?
  - What guidelines can we create that will support sexual abstinence until marriage?
- Look for resources online to use together as parent and student to discuss the issue. Hit the Internet, library or bookstore to become aware of resources centered on True Love Waits.
  - Check out the True Love Waits Website at [www.truelovewaits.com](http://www.truelovewaits.com).
  - Another effective resource you can use with your teenager is 30 Days: Turning the Hearts of Parents and Teenagers toward Each Other by Richard Ross and Gus Reyes. In 30 days you can restore damaged relationships and deepen existing ones between you and your teenager.
  - Read Randy Alcorn's "The Purity Principle" together and discuss it along the way. You can get it here: <http://www.amazon.com/The-Purity-Principle-Safeguards-LifeChange/dp/1590521951>.

**Once your student is at the point of wanting to commit to sexual purity as a lifestyle, a cool way to solidify this commitment is to create a "rite of passage" sexual purity commitment service for your student, and their family and friends. Here are some ideas on how to create such a service.**

1. Invite relatives and friends. You can even go as far as to print invitations to it. You can make the experience as big or as intimate as you want for your teenager.
2. Select a place to have it at. This could be your home, church, a favorite restaurant, the sky is the limit. The point is for it to be a place that is significant to your teen.

### **The Ceremony**

- Welcome your guests and described the purpose of your gathering: "Thank you for coming. Today we have come to celebrate the life of \_\_\_\_\_ and to affirm their desire to remain sexually pure until marriage. \_\_\_\_\_ has accepted Jesus Christ as his/her personal Savior and has already been baptized as a public expression of that very important decision. Throughout his/her life, his/her father and I have spoken with her about God's plan for our lives in relationships. Our conversations have included God's special gift of sexuality, which is to be shared with a special person only in the context of marriage. To this end we have come today as family and friends to support \_\_\_\_\_ in his/her decision and to celebrate his/her transition from childhood to adolescence.
- Vows (Have a parent or significant person do this) \_\_\_\_\_, in the presence of God, family and friends, because of your love for Jesus and belief in His perfect plan for your life, is it your desire and commitment to remain sexually pure until marriage through

the power of God which is available to you? Do you so declare?

- Invite them to respond.
- In the next section have one or both parents talk about how they have personally seen their student profess Christ as their savior, and how they have seen them grow in that relationship with Him. You might also want to include some of what you see to be true in them as an individual. Just make it personal.
- Then turn to the relatives and asked: Is it your desire to affirm \_\_\_\_\_ decision to remain sexually pure until marriage, and do you solemnly promise before God that by His power and grace you will do everything you can to help \_\_\_\_\_ remain true to the vow he/she has taken today? Do you so declare?
- Then invite them to respond with “We Do”

### **Dedication**

Next I would encourage you to anoint your student, daubing a few drops of olive oil on her/her forehead as a symbol of the power of the Holy Spirit in his/her life to give them the strength needed to be true to their vow. Then can both share in a prayer of dedication:

**Mom could say something like:** “Dear God, thank you for being so good to our family despite the trials, temptations, and troubles that have come our way. Thank you for \_\_\_\_\_ and thank you for his/her decision to do your will by remaining sexually pure until marriage. Help \_\_\_\_\_ to know that in his/her strength he/she can do nothing. However, help him/her to know that with your strength all things are possible/

**Dad could say something like:** “You have promised, O Lord, to supply all of our needs and to be with us until the end of the world. Today, we ask that you will provide \_\_\_\_\_ with the desire; determination and strength to be true to his/her vow to remain sexually pure until marriage. May he/she grow to understand that Your will is always best and that if he/she follows Your directions he/she will experience the joy You have planned for him/her. Help him/her to know You will NEVER leave him/her alone. Bless those who are present, and especially bless his/her friends. Help them to take stock of what has happened here today and to know that You can help them to keep the same vow \_\_\_\_\_ has made. Keep \_\_\_\_\_ healthy and strong and ever close to you, in Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

### **Affirmation**

After the prayer of dedication, you can invite family and friends to give speeches of affirmation. This is a chance for others to share words of affirmation for them and their decision to remain sexually pure until marriage. Both parents can then affirm them and let them know that you are proud of them and their courage to make this vow in the presence of their family and friends.

### **The Token**

Finally present them with a token\* that they can keep with them as a reminder of the promise they made to remain sexually pure until marriage. Have Dad or mom hand it to them saying, “Please take this token as a reminder of your vow to remain sexually pure until marriage. It is the hope of your mother and me that you will be able to present this token to your husband/wife on the day of your wedding as a symbol of your gift of sexual purity to them. We love you and

will continue to pray for you and support you in anyway that we can, so that you will be able to honor God in the life that you live each day.”

### **Conclusion**

Is this all it takes to help your student to remain sexually pure until marriage? Of course not. This is only a part of the discipleship process. However, we believe this public expression of their determination that she will remain sexually pure until marriage to be a moment of great significance in the discipleship of your student.

To get to this point, however, it is important for parents to realize that this kind of discipleship in sexuality education begins before children are born, by developing a healthy and Biblical understanding of the role of sexuality in our own lives, which God intentionally created for our joy and for us to be a blessing to the world.

*\* The type of token is optional and should have meaning for your student. Coins, rings, plaques, or other jewelry, have all been used before.*

# What Does the Bible Have to Say About Sex and Purity?

## VERSES ON SEX:

### **1 Corinthians 6:18**

*Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.*

### **Colossians 3:5**

*Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*

### **1 Thessalonians 4:3-8**

*It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.*

### **Hebrews 13:4**

*Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.*

### **Genesis 2:24**

*For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.*

### **1 Corinthians 6:9-11**

*Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor...the greedy nor drunkards...will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, [but] you were sanctified, [but] you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

### **Ephesians 5:3-4**

*But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity...because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place.*

### **Proverbs 8:13**

*To fear the LORD is to hate evil.*

### **Romans 13:14**

*Make no provision for the flesh.*



## **VERSES ON PURITY:**

### **Proverbs 16:2**

*All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the spirit.*

### **James 3:17**

*But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.*

### **I John 3:2-3**

*Dear friends, now we are children of God...But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.*

## **VERSES ABOUT LIVING A GODLY LIFE:**

### **Titus 2:12**

*training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,*

### **1 Timothy 4:8**

*for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.*

### **Romans 12:1-2**

*Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

### **Proverbs 4:23**

*Above all else, guard your heart [mind, inner being], for it is the wellspring of life.*

### **Psalms 119:37**

*Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your Word.*

### **Philippians 4:8**

*Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure...think about such things.*

## **VERSES ABOUT HAVING A PURE HEART:**

### **Psalms 51:10**

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.*

### **Matthew 5:8**

*"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

**Philippians 1:9-11**

*And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*

**Psalms 24:3-5**

*Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation.*