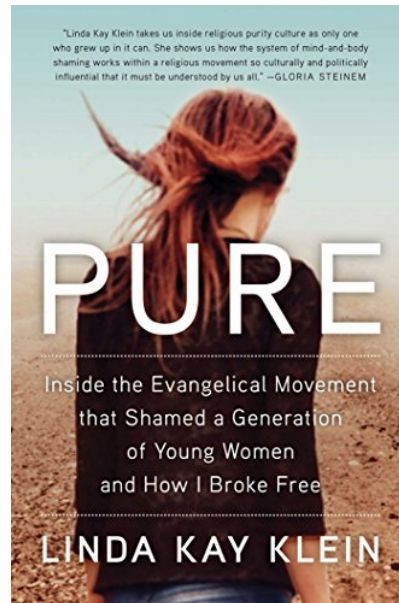


[Free PDF File] Pure: Inside the Evangelical Movement That Shamed a Generation of Young Women and How I Broke Free



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From a woman who has been there and back, the first inside look at the devastating effects evangelical Christianity's purity culture has had on a generation of young women--in a potent combination of journalism, cultural commentary, and memoir. In the 1990s, a "purity industry" emerged out of the white evangelical Christian culture. Purity rings, purity pledges, and purity balls came with a dangerous message: girls are potential sexual "stumbling blocks" for boys and men, and any expression of a girl's sexuality could reflect the corruption of her character. This message traumatized many girls--resulting in anxiety, fear, and experiences that mimicked the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder--and trapped them in a cycle of shame. This is the sex education Linda Kay Klein grew up with. Fearing being marked a Jezebel, Klein broke up with her high school boyfriend because she thought God told her to, and took pregnancy tests though she was a virgin, terrified that any sexual activity would be punished with an out-of-wedlock pregnancy. When the youth pastor of her church was convicted of sexual enticement of a twelve-year-old girl, Klein began to question the purity-based sexual ethic. She contacted young women she knew, asking if they were coping with the same shame-induced issues she was. These intimate conversations developed into a twelve-year quest that took her across the country and into the lives of women raised in similar religious communities--a journey that facilitated her own healing and led her to churches that are seeking a new way to reconcile sexuality and spirituality. Sexual shame is by no means confined to evangelical culture; Pure is a powerful wake-up call about our society's subjugation of women.

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