

PURITY

[adjective: purer, purest]
free from anything of a different, inferior, or
contaminating kind; free from extraneous matter

Earlier, we talked about guarding your eyes and ears from things that you should not hear or see -- in order to guard your heart.

There are a number of ways to define purity. In the sense of your virtue as a young woman, we mean not only keeping yourself pure for marriage in a physical way, but also keeping your heart and mind unsullied by the things that degrade us as women, things that destroy your values, and things that divide your heart from God.

As we seek God, we need to clear away the obstacles that keep us from getting close to him. Jesus told his disciples that "the pure in heart shall see God."

Through the following articles on Purity, we will learn what it means to have a pure heart, what it takes to be clean in God's eyes, and how

we can steer clear of the many pitfalls that every girl faces.

To begin with, as you understand what pure means, and its infinite value to you and your life's goals, you will realize the need to make a resolution - a pledge to stay pure. If we don't set standards for ourselves before we are faced with temptations, we set ourselves up to be trapped.

As you go through this study, think about the situations in your life where you might get into trouble, when it comes to guarding your purity. Then, think through exactly what you will do, and what you will say, to stand your ground.

Just like a soldier knows his strategies and exit plans before he runs into battle, you, in defense of your virtue, should have some absolutes that you set for yourself. You will

find some suggestions in the section on dating...

When you finish this section, pray about and consider the Purity Pledge on the opposite page. Don't take it lightly. A pledge is a promise, and something more.

It doesn't take a strong person to go along with what everyone else is doing. Anyone can do what everyone else is doing. It takes a strong, brave woman to stand your ground, and stick to your principles under pressure. To be pure, you have to be brave and strong, first.

"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/her own body in a way that is holy and honorable." 1 Thess 4:3-4

“How can a young person stay pure?
By obeying your word.” Psalm 119:9

Purity Pledge



True Love Waits
Solitaire Heart Ring by
purityringsonline.com

Today, I am making a commitment
to myself, my family, and my Creator,
that I will abstain from sexual activity
of any kind before marriage.

I will keep my body and my thoughts pure as
I trust in God's perfect plan
for my life.

Signature

Date



Sideways Cross
Rose Gold Purity Ring
by gemologica.com

Purity Pledge courtesy of True Love Waits



PURE

SEXUAL INTEGRITY

In an earlier section, we talked about integrity -- it means something is the same, through and through, reliable, solid, and pure. Having sexual integrity, then is something you simply cannot separate from your overall integrity -- your character involves your virtue.

Sexual integrity means you refuse to be weak and compromise your values, when it comes to romance, love, dating, all those situations that can lead to physical contact.

Proverbs 31, in describing a woman of value, asks,

"Who can find a virtuous woman? her value is far above rubies."

It's important to know that, at the time, rubies were more valued than diamonds.

In a day and age where we are ambushed by images of sex from every angle, and all of society tells us that our sexual identity IS our primary identity, we have to constantly weed out all the nonsense, and stick to some basic truths.

SEX IS NOT BAD

It's supposed to be special. It was designed to be part of a covenant -- the vows you and your husband make to God-- something you share with your lifelong mate, not some random boy you go to school with. Not even the guy who you think might be "the one," and you hope to marry him someday.

It's like this: a blazing fire in the fireplace is beautiful, cozy, warm...where it belongs. But if it topples outside the fireplace, it turns into a hazard. Things get burned - people get hurt, even destroyed. It has to stay in the fireplace. Sex was meant to stay inside of marriage, because, outside of it, it's a hazard, instead of a pleasure.

EVERYTHING COUNTS

You can't say only certain things are "technically" sex, and other things are not. If it involves physical contact of any kind, with anything clothes are supposed to cover, it's sexual contact. It does count.

Don't play word games with your purity. That's what a child does -- dance around the truth, so they can get away with things without being caught. If you're old enough to know about such "activities," then you're old enough to act like a woman, not a child, and face the facts for what they are.

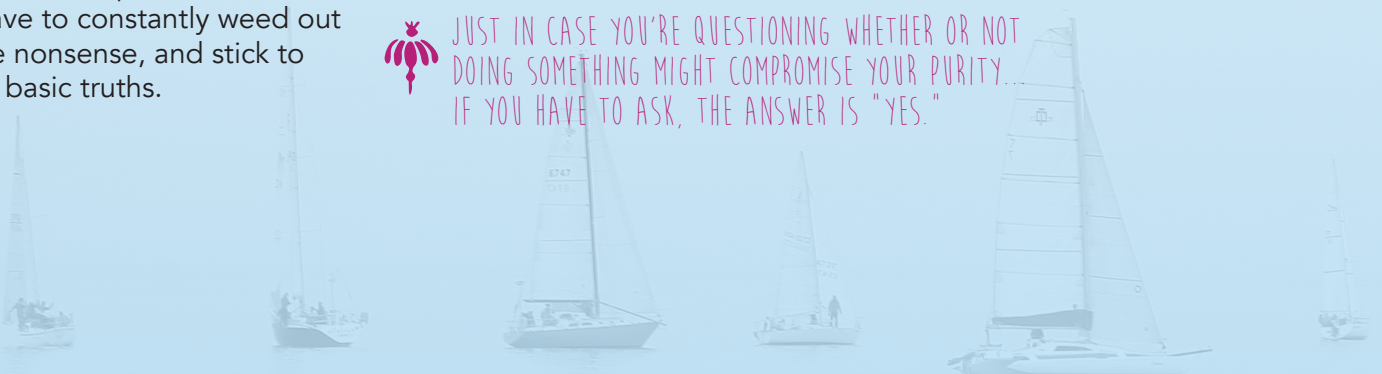
PURITY = POWER

Other girls, or even boys, will make fun of you for being "scared" to experiment with sex, but they are wrong. Purity is power. It's something you choose, something you fight for, and something you resolve to maintain at any cost, to secure the amazing future God has planned for you. How could that be something to be ashamed of? Don't let others choose your future for you.

Women of true virtue, purity and integrity are rare and priceless, and have an overwhelming advantage in life over all their peers who are just "playing around."



JUST IN CASE YOU'RE QUESTIONING WHETHER OR NOT DOING SOMETHING MIGHT COMPROMISE YOUR PURITY... IF YOU HAVE TO ASK, THE ANSWER IS "YES."



4 KEY POINTS ABOUT PURITY

- I. PURITY IS A BATTLE YOU MUST WIN
- II. YOUR BATTLE MUST HAVE A STRATEGY
- III. WHAT WE FEED, THRIVES
- IV. REAL WOMEN REQUIRE RESPECT

4 KEY VERSES:

- 1** "Who can find a virtuous woman, for her value is far above rubies." (Proverbs 31:10)

- 2** "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" (Jeremiah 29:11)

- 3** "Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? One who has clean hands and a pure heart..." Psalm 24:3-4

- 4** "God's will is for you to be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin. 4 Then each of you will control his own body[a] and live in holiness and honor."
1 Thessalonians 4:3

MAKING UP MY MIND TO BECOME & STAY PURE

List the ways you would benefit from being pure.





PURE

PURITY IS A BATTLE YOU MUST WIN

Why is purity so important? First, because it is God's design, and plan. Second, your virginity is a powerful, priceless gift; something that you can give ONLY ONCE, and then it's gone.

But there are many good reasons by staying pure until you are married is really the best way. True love may only happen once in a lifetime, too. What if you give yourself away before you realize he's not "the one?"

There is a beautiful story we share with all of our Ladies of Honor girls when we talk about waiting for marriage. Yes, it's a fictional story, but even Jesus used stories to illustrate a point. If we build our expectations on fairy tales like Cinderella, why not listen to this one, and seriously think about what it means?

THE IMPATIENT PRINCESS

Once upon a time, not so long ago, in a land not so far away, there lived a beautiful young princess. She was loved, cared for, and taught great wisdom by her mother and father. She had every advantage a girl could possibly have -- brains, beauty, fortune, talent, popularity...yet, somehow, it was

not enough. Sunset after sunset, she sat by the window of her room in the tallest tower of the castle, looking out over the kingdom, sighing with loneliness.

"When will my prince ever come?" she wondered. Day after day, through all the parties, balls, and outings, she looked around her at the handsome men that often passed by. "I wonder if he's the one?" She thought. But none of them gave her more than a second look, or a second dance, or a stroll together in the garden...nothing ever bloomed into love.

She met her Prince Charming once, and it was magical...but he was called away on international duties, and had been long gone.

One day, a handsome young man galloped up to the castle door, jumped from his horse, and asked to see the princess. He was a local boy -- she knew him well. He often winked at her when she passed by, would kiss her hand at every ball, and always tell her how gorgeous she was. But there was something missing. She never heard any harm of him, but, somehow, there was something lacking. There was no spark, no beating of her heart, no instant connection to tell her that he was the one. Her father was not pleased--it wasn't just that he didn't like the young man's character, he

could tell she was really "head over heels" for this guy -- why would she jump at the chance to spend the rest of her life with him?

OK, He was a little immature, but he would grow up, she told herself. And he was always flirting with everyone else, too. Maybe that was just his lively personality, she thought--she could rein him in. Then there was the way he was always trying to get her to sneak off with him somewhere, and the way he looked at her made it seem a little creepy.

"He might not be Mr. Right, but he's good enough," she told herself, and when night fell over the kingdom, he came to get her and she ran away with him!

The very next day, out of the blue, with no notice at all, her long-lost Prince Charming returned.

"I have made my fortune, conquered my enemies, and come to claim my princess!" he said. How heartbroken he was to discover that she had run away with another!

The impatient princess had given up on her Prince Charming too soon - and traded him for Mr. Not So Charming. What a tragedy!

2. YOUR BATTLE MUST HAVE STRATEGY

“My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure.” - Alfred, Lord Tennyson

How do we fight this battle? in our hearts and minds. And it's important to fight with your eyes wide open -- being fully aware of what is going on.

Satan wants to do anything and everything possible to destroy you. That's what it's all about. If you can be tempted with pornography, or lured away by a good looking guy, that's the mode of attack he will use.

And it's not just a fight for your body -- it's a fight for your soul. So if that's what it's all about, that's where you need to stand your ground and defend yourself, spiritually, taking up every spiritual weapon you can find to stand your ground.

“For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, pulling down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 10:4-5)

If you want to win this battle, you need to arm your-

self well, with all the right tools:

YOUR SWORD

Our most important defense is the Bible -- the Word of God is compared to a double-edged sword, sharp, powerful and quick to divide the truth from everything else. God's word never changes, and he never changes, so His word is what's called an absolute -- everything else should be measured by God's word, not the other way around. Read the Bible and learn what God has to teach you about overcoming every battle in your life. It is your most powerful weapon against enemy attacks.

YOUR SHIELD

Guard your eyes and your ears from things you know will “infect” you with the wrong kinds of ideas. How do you know its' wrong? It doesn't measure up against God's word.

YOUR WATCH

Time. It's all about God's timing. Don't make the mistake of trying rush God's plan for your life. Don't wake love before it is time.



Kings Cross Staunton
Camel Bone Chessmen
thechesspiece.com



Sterling silver cross pendant
fashionjunkie4life.com

BATTLE: (NOUN)

1. A HOSTILE ENCOUNTER OR ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN OPPOSING FORCES;
2. ANY CONFLICT OR STRUGGLE.

3. WHAT YOU FEED.....FLOURISHES!



PURE

THINGS GROW, BLOOM AND FLOURISH WHEN FED

Things grow when they are fed, and starve when they are not. Sexual desire is something that can be controlled, if you don't constantly feed it by entertaining thoughts about it. We do have the power to say "no" to those thoughts and weaken the desire.

An Indian chief once told his daughter, "I have two dogs fighting inside of me, one very dark and evil, one very strong and good."

"Which one wins?" his daughter asked. He replied, "The one I feed the most."

We have two natures inside of us, battling for control. One is described in the Bible as the "flesh." This is our sinful nature -- our instincts toward selfishness, desire, anger, all those things we know cause us to sin. The other one is our spirit.

Jesus once said "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." How true that is for so many things! Our spirit tells us it's right to wait until after dinner for that box of cookies that's calling our name...our flesh wants to eat the whole box of cookies right now!

If we feed and follow our flesh -- by feed, we mean indulge, give in to, spoil, etc. -- then our flesh gets stronger, and becomes the driving force in

our lives. It will always lead us to ruin. This is how people wind up with addictions, anger issues, and self-destructive lifestyles. They are feeding the bad dog with the wrong kinds of movies, music, conversations, thoughts, and probably following through with actions that get them into trouble deeper and deeper.

The thing to do, every day, is to feed your spirit, first and foremost. Remember when we talked about the transformation chamber? How you need to start fresh every day by putting down your own desires, and committing to take up your cross to follow Christ? It is an ongoing thing -- you can never stop, if you want to win this battle.

How do we feed the spirit?

- Read the Bible
- Pray
- Listen to Godly music (refer to the Philippians 4:8 test)
- Talking with disciplined followers of Jesus
- Working hard at your commitment to Christ
- Doing the right thing

The book of James tells us that we should be "DOers of the Word, and not hearers only." In order for God's word's to really sink in and take effect in our lives, we have to put them into action.



REMEDY FOR WRONG THOUGHTS – MAKE THIS A DAILY PRAYER AND A CONSTANT STANDARD FOR YOURSELF:

LET THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH AND THE MEDITATIONS OF MY HEART BE ACCEPTABLE IN THY SIGHT, O LORD, MY STRENGTH AND MY REDEEMER

(PSALM 19:14)

“You are an heiress. Act like one.” -- Beth Moore

4. REAL WOMEN REQUIRE RESPECT

YOUR PRINCE WILL KNOW HOW TO TREAT YOU LIKE A PRINCESS.

Real men honor women. The entire code of Chivalry dictates that a man use all his capabilities to protect and honor women.

A wise woman, and former first lady, once said that no one can treat you badly without your permission. This goes for friends, guys, and everyone, but mostly guys, for the purpose of this lesson.

It's pretty simple. If you don't want to be treated like a plaything, or a woman with no value, 1) don't behave or present yourself like one; and 2) don't tolerate being treated like one.

The conflict happens when we send boys mixed messages. Once, a teenage girl I know wore a very short skirt to class. As her brother sat down across from her, he was very blunt about it “that skirt is so short I can see your underpants!” She was furious at being called out. Now, he didn't exactly handle it like a gentleman, but he was very young.

“WHY are you looking??” she demanded, defending her outfit.

“WHY are you showing us everything?” he replied.

That was a completely honest, male response. Boys are going to be tempted to look. If you don't want them looking at you like that, don't give them anything to look AT, I instructed her.

Cover up. Make sure your skirts and shorts are long enough, and your shirts are the right size, etc. to cover yourself up. Your body is to be guarded and cherished, not flaunted, as if it's nothing valuable.

If you had a hundred dollar bill, you would make sure it was well hidden, whether it's in your pocket, your purse, or inside your bra, so no one could take it without your permission. Isn't your body more valuable than that?

Guys battle with sexual thoughts, too. If you dress in a way that provokes them, aren't you participating in the enemy's attempts to trap them? Don't be a tool.

And, good grief, don't ever, ever take revealing pictures of yourself and send them to anyone. You have no control at all, after that image has been put out there, and then it is out there forever! Embarrassing photos like that have ruined many lives, and many futures.

Another way we earn respect is by acting like a lady. A Lady of Honor, ideally, but certainly, like a lady.

ADVICE FROM OUR HONOR GUARDS: HOW TO ACT LIKE A LADY (AND STOP EMBARRASSING YOURSELF)

DO NOT

- SWEAR OR USE DIRTY LANGUAGE
- YELL OR LAUGH TOO LOUDLY
- DEMAND ATTENTION
- LOSE YOUR TEMPER
- SAY ANYTHING ABOUT ANYONE YOU WOULD NOT WANT TO GET BACK TO THEM
- POST ANYTHING ON SOCIAL MEDIA THAT YOU WOULD BE EMBARRASSED TO PUT ON A BILLBOARD.

DO

- TREAT OTHERS WITH KINDNESS AND RESPECT AT ALL TIMES
- LEARN COMPOSURE - CONTROL YOUR EMOTIONS, OR THEY WILL CONTROL YOU
- SAY PLEASE, THANK YOU, MA'AM AND SIR AS OFTEN AS YOU CAN
- READ, LEARN AND USE NEW WORDS, SO YOU CAN EXPRESS YOURSELF WELL
- KEEP YOUR APPEARANCE NEAT, CLEAN AND WEAR APPROPRIATE CLOTHES FOR THE OCCASION

✦ RECOMMENDED READING:
SECRET KEEPER:
THE DELICATE POWER OF MODESTY



RESPECT YOURSELF

When it comes to the way you dress, especially, you want the freedom to express yourself. That can be a beautiful, fun thing--a thing to be encouraged and embraced.

But, at the same time, while you are "expressing yourself," you should always think about WHAT you are expressing. If your appearance was a message, what would it say about you? Do you spend too much, or too little time composing that message? Are you presenting yourself in a way that says you are valuable, or cheap?

Don't take the easy exit out of this conversation. Christian girls are too likely to pull out the scripture that says "Don't judge by appearance...the Lord looks at the heart." You should read the first book of Samuel, and understand the context of that verse, before you use it to defend your inappropriate outfit.

In that passage, God was telling the prophet Samuel not to pass over David, the common looking little teenager, the youngest brother, who seemed the least likely choice for the

next King of Israel. If it were a popularity contest, David's older brothers would have been chosen, as tried-and-true warriors, tall and rugged and good-looking. They looked like Kings, but David was the young man "after God's own heart," and God could see that the shepherd boy/musician had the makings of a champion on the inside.

God looks, and judges, deeper than man's definition of "capable" in order to redefine an ordinary person into a hero. That's what he meant by looking at the heart, instead of the outward appearance.

So, we really should value what's on the inside, and see people the way God sees them.

On the other hand, we need to remember something that's more important than anything else. If you have truly given your heart and life to Jesus, then sending HIS message will be far more important than sending your own. Remember that he is in you, and with you, and that you represent him to others who DON'T know Him, and don't know you, either.

If He lives in Us, we belong to Him. We should treat our bodies and dress our bodies with the respect and care we feel for God.

REMEDY: MIRROR CHECK

An age-old way to decide whether your outfit should get the thumbs up, or not: It is a little trick classic designer Coco Chanel related, in the middle of a fashion fad when women tended to go a little crazy with accessories.

The rule was to look in the mirror, and the first thing that catches your eye, well it has to go. She was kind of a minimalist, but her idea was on target -- the focus should be YOU, not your jewelry, scarves, etc.

The standard has softened today: a little pop of color is fun, but do not be tempted to over-do it.

To add something more to that, when you do that last mirror check, ask the Lord, is there anything I am wearing that does not please you? Then listen to your heart.,



Expressing yourself? What's your message?

Ten Top "Making a Statement" Mistakes

1. Too small - It's ironic, but wearing clothes that are too tight actually do not make you look smaller. They are often immodest, and not comfortable, either. Know your size, and wear it.

2. Too big - The key element in art is balance. If you're wearing a baggy blouse, wear fitted pants, skinny jeans, or a pencil skirt. If you're wearing a full skirt, wear a more tailored or fitted blouse. Wearing all baggy clothes can be comfy, but they will never look neat together.

3. Clothes that clash - You can mix florals with geometrics, but never geometrics with geometrics, or different florals. Stick to one theme, and keep all the background pieces subtle.

4. Overstatement - We all love a little neon or animal print, but like a rich dessert, a little should go a

long way. Instead of overdoing it, and taking the attention away from your simple beauty, pick one little statement piece, and simplify the rest of the outfit.

5. Too effortless - No girl should look as if she just tumbled out of bed and threw on some random clothes. Pick out something neat and clean, and make yourself presentable, no matter where you go. You never know whom you'll meet!

6. Wrong place - wrong time - Don't wear a black party dress to a funeral, just because it's black, and don't wear your hanging-out-with-friends worn-out jeans to go with your mom to her office, or to visit her friends. Present yourself in a way that says you're somebody important, too, and that you know what's what -- what's right.

7. Impractical - If you know your outing involves a lot of walking, leave the high heels at home and opt for some pretty sandals.

8. Should be retired - Some things can be mended, and others can't. If your favorite old graphic tee is looking faded and falling apart, retire it.

9. Too revealing - Showing too much skin doesn't show confidence -- it says you think your personal assets are the only thing you have going on for you, and that's just not true. Be mindful of your neckline -- you should not be showing cleavage; and your hemline -- your skirt should be long enough to keep you well covered, even when you are sitting down. Always wear a camisole or tank top under sheer blouses, and if the skirt is helplessly short, add some leggings.

10. Not "you" - nobody wants you to dress like your grandmother (unless she's really stylish!) or to be someone you are not. But you can make choices that really show who you ARE, without letting your fashion get in the way of your message.



PURGE

The Last Chocolate Bar

IMAGINE you LOVE chocolate. OK, that's not hard to imagine. Now imagine that it's the very last chocolate bar on earth. Horrifying! The good thing is, YOU have it. It's all yours, and it's just enough to share with ONE person. Everybody wants some. You get to pick the ending to this story.



By the way, you have heard that your Prince Charming is out there, looking for you, and loves chocolate!

STORY ENDING A

The cutest guy you've ever seen asks you for a date. As he's driving you home, he asks you to share some of your chocolate bar. He doesn't want all of it, just some.

So you share, and share some more the next time, before you know it, you've given it all to him. Then, after awhile, he breaks up with you.

Now, here you are, with a broken heart, and no treasure to share with your Prince Charming, when he finally comes along.

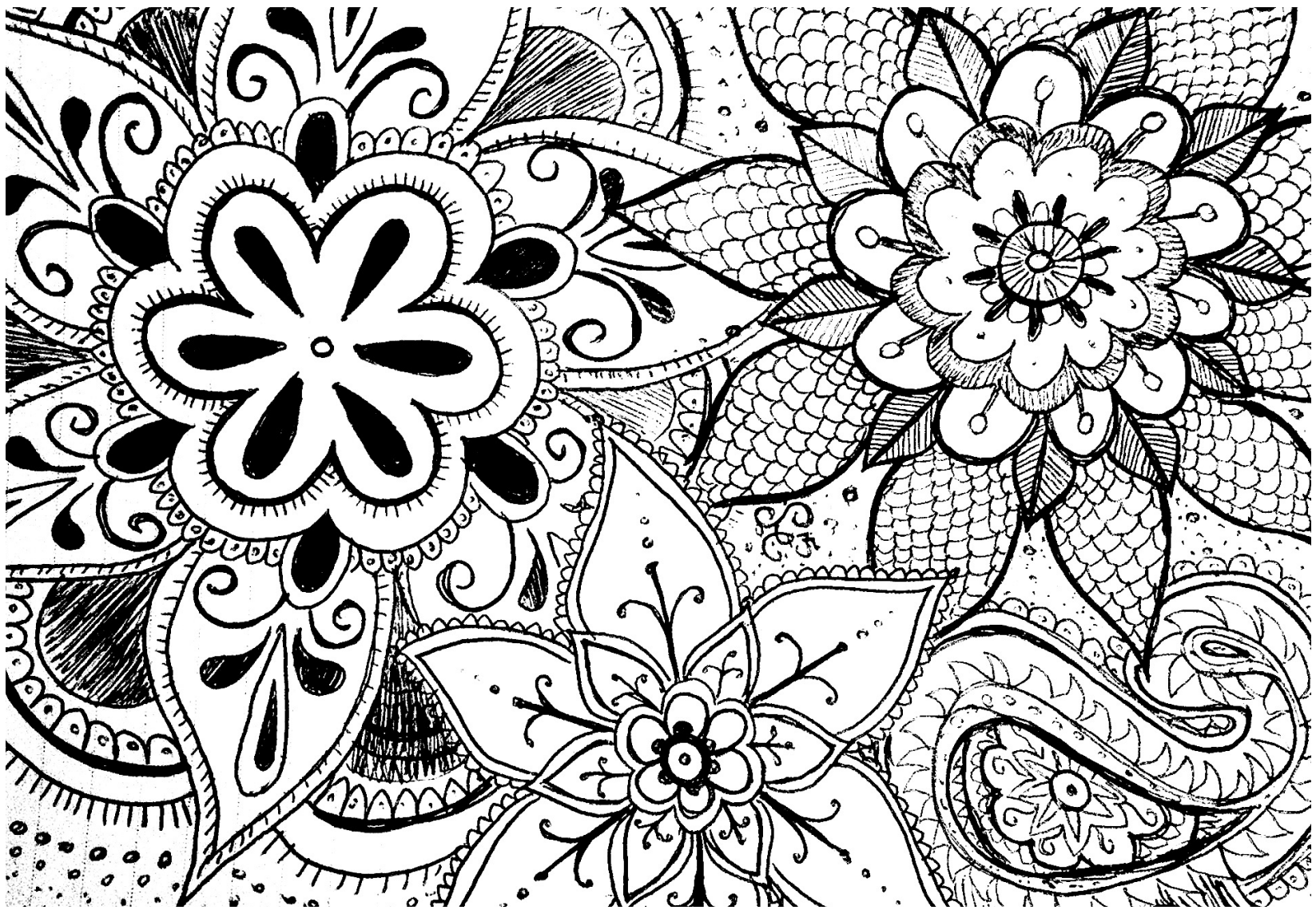
STORY ENDING B

You are a social butterfly, and you finally get to date! It won't hurt to share just a little chocolate with a few boys along the way -- after all, you don't give them very much, just a little...

Still, little by little, piece by piece, you wind up with none left. Where did it all go, while you were having fun, playing the dating game?

After three or four boyfriends, you're all out, or just have little pieces left that have already been sampled. EWW! Your Prince won't like that :|

STORY ENDING C -- YOUR VERSION



PURITY IS POWER | PURITY IS BEAUTY | PURITY IS PERFECTION



PURITY
SNAPSHOT:
KARI JOBE

Everyone watched as the beautiful and talented young Kari Jobe went through college, and on to her highly successful worship music career, year after year. At 32 she was still single, and still saving herself for marriage. With a heart fully devoted to God, and all of her talent and energy poured into songwriting, singing, recording and touring all over the world, she remained steady, faithful, and pure.

Was it difficult? She says it was a choice she made, and stuck to, because she knew God had a perfect plan--and it must have included her own Prince Charming. She finally married him in November of 2014, and describes their life as a "taste of Heaven."

"God's timing is perfect, you know, and everyone's walking through things that they're having to trust the Lord for His timing," Jobe said. "My favorite scripture verse is Psalm 27:14, it says, 'Wait on the Lord, be of good courage and He will strengthen your heart.' So, I know that He's had me wait, I'm in my thirties right now, you know, He's had me wait because His timing is perfect."

Jobe continued on to give advice and hope to single girls. "God has a perfect man for you and it will be the best timing when it's the right time and it's God's time," she said.



PURE

GOTTA HAVE THAT GRAPHIC TEE, BUT IT'S A CROP TOP? PAIR IT WITH A BRIGHT CAMI.

MAKE A TOO-STRAPPY-FOR-CHURCH BLOUSE INSTANTLY APPROPRIATE WITH A JACKET, CARDIGAN, OR BLAZER.



SKIRT LENGTHS CAN BE TRICKY. TRY IT ON, AND BE SURE IT KEEPS YOU COVERED TO MID THIGH, AT LEAST, EVEN WHEN YOU ARE SITTING.



STEPPING OUT IN SANDALS? MAKE SURE YOU'RE "POLISHED" ENOUGH. DON'T LET CHIPPED TOE-PAINT CHIP AWAY AT YOUR FIRST IMPRESSION.

EASY TOO-SHORT SKIRT X: SOME GREAT LEGGINS!

Casually Dressy

When going out with your friends, put a dressy twist to your otherwise casual outfit with a pretty skirt instead of shorts, and some comfy but cute sandals. It takes only one piece to take an outfit from so-so to stunning.

Mix and Match, Dressing Up Jeans

You don't have to own a bunch of clothes to look nice. A nice jacket or cardigan will dress up even your graphic tee and skinny-jeans combo. Experiment with mixing and matching your different pieces, or let a friend try, to see some fresh new combinations!

SYNONYMS: CLEAN, INNOCENT, VIRTUOUS

PURE: 100% NOT CONTAMINATED, POLLUTED OR COMPROMISED

PURITY = SEXUAL INTEGRITY

“Being powerful is like being a Lady.

If you have to tell people that you are, then you are not.”

SHEER IS THE TREND NOW,
BUT KEEP IT LEGIT AND PRETTY BY
LAYERING IT OVER A NEUTRAL OR MATCHING CAMI.

FEELING ADVENTEROUS? TRY A DIFFERENT
PRINT, OR LACEY BLOUSE, FOR
ANOTHER LAYER OF
“INTERESTING.”

WITH ACCESSORIES, YOU WANT TO STICK TO ONE
“STATEMENT PIECE” EITHER BOLD EARRINGS, OR A FUN
COSTUME JEWELRY RING, OR A BEADED HEADBAND...

DON'T MAKE YOUR BEST PIECES
COMPETE WITH
EACH OTHER.



LEGGING/JEGGING HACK:
THE DARKER THE COLOR,
THE DRESSIER. SOME DARKER
JEGGINGS WILL INSTANTLY TAKE
YOUR OUTFIT UP A NOTCH...



MIND THE WAY YOU SIT WHEN YOU WEAR A SKIRT OF ANY LENGTH. A LADY
SITS WITH KNEES TOGETHER, ANKLES CROSSED ONLY. IF YOU'RE STILL ON A
LEARNING CURVE, HEAR, YOU MIGHT OPT FOR SOME SPANDEX SHORTS...

Jeans and Boots, Breathlessly Pretty

Enjoy the comfort of your favorite jeans and reliable old boots, but top it off with a feminine top to take it to new levels. A soft colorful blouse is just as cozy as a T-shirt, but makes you look way more than presentable. Semi-Formal, Totally Cute

Never skimp on a semi-formal occasion. It means you wear a dress, or at least a skirt. Adding a jacket or cardigan gives it a finished, polished look -- in whatever color you like! Nice sandals are always an acceptable option to heels or flats, when you're young...especially if you're going to be spending a lot of time on your feet, enjoying the party!

MANNERS MATTER

A girl's guide to being a Lady

Emily Post: "Manners are a sensitive awareness of the feelings of others..."

A lady is always a lady, first and foremost. Even on the soccer field, you can conduct yourself with a degree of honor and poise that tells everyone -- wow, she's a fierce goalie, but she's also a real lady.

Being a lady has nothing to do with your age - sometimes, sadly, an eight year old girl can be more of a lady than a thirty-year-old woman.

It may surprise you to hear that good manners are, in fact, very Christlike. Not the judgy, snobby manners you may have seen--those really aren't manners at all. Not Christlike, either.

Much like the concept of being "a good Christian," the concept of being a true lady or gentleman has been grossly misconstrued--even reversed. Both have been defined as having a sense of superiority, with a self-assured judgmental outlook, and snobbish demeanor. In both cases, people--including those who think they are ladies, gentlemen, or Christians--could not be farther from the truth.

Humble yourself. Serve others. Love your neighbor. Be kind to one another...

As his disciples debated over their own importance one day (yikes--can you believe they had the nerve to do that within earshot of Jesus? Had they not been paying attention at all?), their teacher was quick to correct them. The one who becomes the servant to all will be the greatest, He told them. This concept challenges every social structure--can you imagine the most popular, richest girl in school, stopping to pick up trash in the hallways, or helping a "nobody" carry her books?

Jesus showed just as much kindness and hospitality to the worst of the worst, as he did the best of the best.

Consider the quote from Emily Post, compare it to the scripture that follows, then consider this revolutionary idea: By trying to improve ourselves as ladies and gentlemen--practicing better manners--we will become better Christians, that is, better and truer examples of Christ to all the world.

Ephesians 4:32: "...be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you."



Crown Jewels candle lantern



Monticello wooden lantern wayfair.com

"LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN, THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS, AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN." MATTHEW 5:16

10 essentials

1. Say please, thank you, and you're welcome...as often as you possibly can. You can never be too polite.

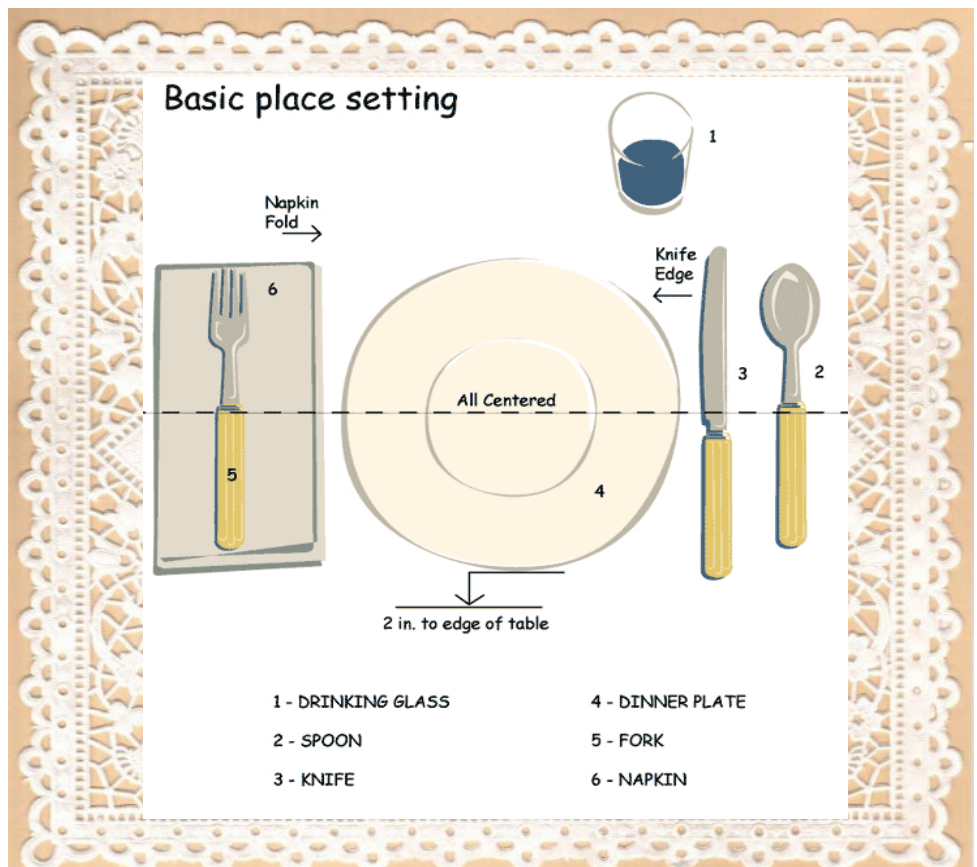
2. Always smile and say, "hello." Never overlook an opportunity to greet someone. Everyone matters -- everyone deserves not only your courtesy, but your kindness.

3. Let others go first. That goes for conversation, a place in line, or an opportunity to shine. Let others have their say, and have their way. Most such things don't matter that much -- and you will be remembered as the kind, gracious girl, instead of the pushy girl.

4. Never leave a mess. If you pass a discarded candy wrapper in the hall, throw it away. If you leave crumbs on the counter, clean them up. You want to leave an impression wherever you go, but a good one. Return things you borrow promptly, and in clean, good condition. Offer to help do the dishes, when you are a guest. Always leave a place better than you found it.

5. Take the lead, when it's proper. When you're in a situation where people don't know each other, or don't get along well, be the one who can put an end to the awkward silence. Start, and lead, a cheerful conversation on something you know interests everyone, and draw the others in with leading questions until everyone is talking together comfortably.

6. Speak up, speak clearly, and speak well. Read, research, and pay attention to grown-up conversations so that you can speak



Intelligently with them. Don't talk too fast, or use slang, or slouch or look down when you talk. Stand up straight, and look them in the eye, like you have something to say, worth hearing, and you will be taken seriously. Be respectful; don't argue. Know when to graciously keep quiet. Conversation isn't supposed to be a debate--it's supposed to be a manner of learning about each other. Listen, more than you speak, and think about the consequences of your words, before you say them. These are the elements that define mature conversation.

7. Sit like a lady. Knees together, whether you are wearing a skirt or not. Sit up, shoulders back. When an adult approaches you, rise to your feet.

8. Dine like a lady. Always place a napkin in your lap. Always bless

your food. Never talk with your mouth full, or make any noises of any kind. Never discuss anything at the table that you would not put ON the table. Never spit out anything, complain about the food, or make faces. Eat slowly and chew silently. Always thank your host/hostess for the meal, compliment the cook, and, when you are finished, lay your utensils across your plate and lay your napkin over them.

9. Dress like a lady. Modesty should rule your wardrobe. Don't wear t-shirts with obnoxious words or images, and make sure you are dressed right for the type of occasion.

10. Never correct others. Never correct someone else's grammar or manners. According to every standard and guide, this is one of the biggest offenses of all, when it comes to good etiquette.

Purity in Relationships

COURTING VS. DATING

Dating - Dating is a relationship where two people of the opposite sex like each other in ways more than friendship and decide that they are going to enter into a deeper relationship, even to the point of resembling a marriage. Marriage is not often the goal of dating. It is just a relationship in which the couple may express their feelings of love and attraction to each other. People who date also break up and date others. Many times, people who date will date 10-20 people in their lifetime.

The important thing to understand about dating is that dating relationships almost always end in a "break-up". At first, this is very painful. But over time, and through many break-ups, it becomes easier to break up the relationship.

When people become good at breaking up and moving on, it sets a pattern of relationship breaking in their lives that will make it harder for them to make the lifetime commitment of marriage.

Courting - Courting is a relationship where two people of the opposite sex like each other in ways more than friendship and decide with the help of their parents, and pastors, to enter into a structured relationship with the hopes of eventually marrying.

The important part to understand about courting is that the courting relationship is a structured relationship where both people are accountable to their parents, their leaders, and to the Lord.



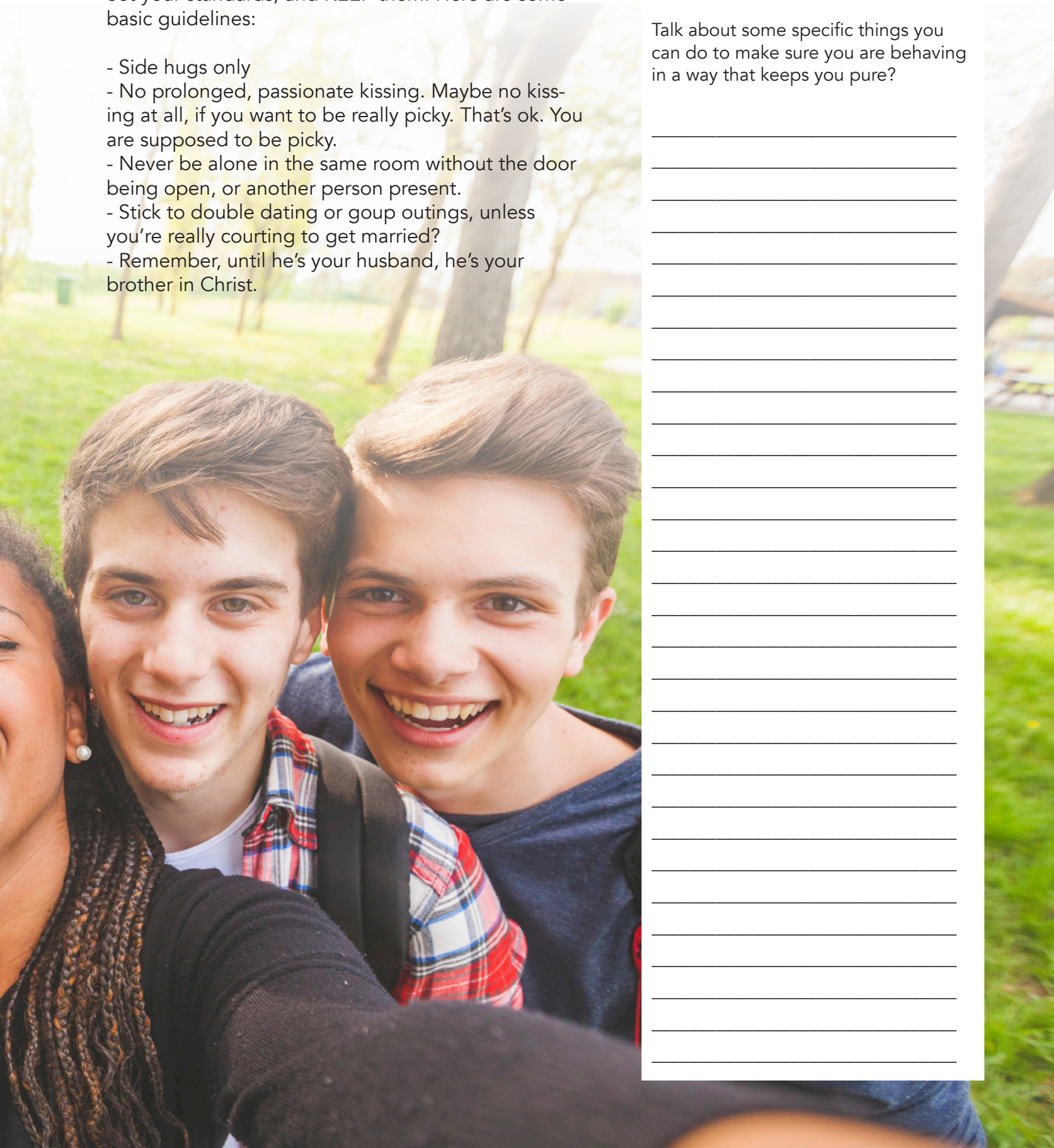
“When a people get good at breaking up and moving on, it sets a pattern of relationship-breaking in their lives.”

Set your standards, and KEEP them. Here are some basic guidelines:

- Side hugs only
- No prolonged, passionate kissing. Maybe no kissing at all, if you want to be really picky. That's ok. You are supposed to be picky.
- Never be alone in the same room without the door being open, or another person present.
- Stick to double dating or group outings, unless you're really courting to get married?
- Remember, until he's your husband, he's your brother in Christ.

JOURNAL: PURITY IMPROVEMENT

Talk about some specific things you can do to make sure you are behaving in a way that keeps you pure?



SOMEDAY

MY PRINCE WILL FIND ME...

The List

MAKE A LIST OF EVERY THING YOU WANT YOUR PRINCE CHARMING TO BE. THINK CAREFULLY. KEEP IT, AND CHECK YOUR SUITORS AGAINST IT TO SEE IF THEY MEASURE UP. THIS IS HOW YOU'LL KNOW HE'S REALLY THE ONE!

MY *List*



“Because God has made us for Himself, our hearts are restless until they rest in Him.” -- Augustine

HEART MATTERS

Do you ever feel restless, like there's just no sense of order or justice or true beauty in the world around you? You want to help your friends get along; you want to make your parents stop fighting; you want to tell your sister she should be dressing like you like to dress...yet, we feel so powerless in the face of all the world's problems. That feeling of powerlessness turns to restlessness, anxiety, and despair. We give up. We lose hope after very long, if we try to fight all these battles on our own.

The truth is, the frustration you feel doesn't come from the outside--it comes from the inside. We can't blame others for own

state of mind -- our lack of peace, joy, or courage -- it all comes from within our own hearts.

Remember, Jesus said that it's what comes out of the heart that defiles you (makes you sin, makes you feel horrible or your life unbearable).

We are broken. We need Jesus to fix us -- instead of trying to fix it all ourselves. All of our brokenness comes from this basic need for the Lord to step in and steer us. Without Him, we are little boats tossed in the sea, with no captain, no life-jacket, no oars, no map --- we are lost.

If we want things to change, we must change our hearts, and only Jesus can do that, if you surrender it to Him.

[] PRAY:

LORD, | SURRENDER MY WHOLE HEART TO YOU.

**FROM THIS DAY FORWARD, | WILL TRUST YOU TO FIX MY PROBLEMS,
INSTEAD OF TRYING TO FIX THEM MYSELF.**

[] DO:

**WRITE ALL THE THINGS THAT ARE
TROUBLING YOU ON A PIECE OF PAPER.**

THEN TEAR IT UP, CRUMBLE IT UP, STOMP ON IT, AND THROW IT AWAY.

SURRENDER ALL THOSE THINGS, AND DO NOT PICK THEM UP AGAIN.



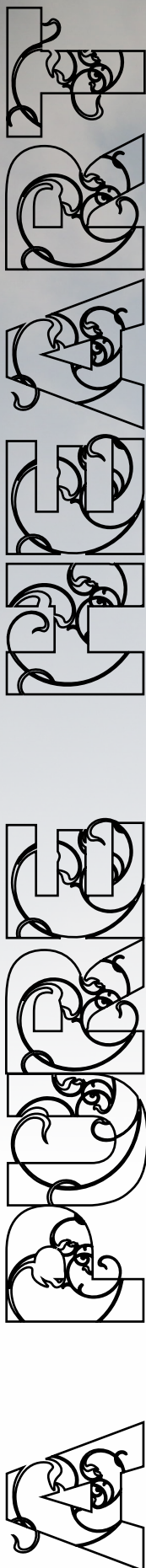
Handmade wooden carved hearts
from Handmaderetail.com

YOUR HEART IS "ONE OF A KIND" TOO ;)

4 MORE KEY VERSES:

- 1 "AND THEN HE (JESUS) ADDED, 'IT IS WHAT COMES FROM INSIDE THAT DEFILES YOU.' (MARK 7:20-23)
- 2 "GUARD YOUR HEART ABOVE ALL ELSE, FOR IT DETERMINES THE COURSE OF YOUR LIFE" (PROVERBS 4:23)
- 3 "IF YOU FORGIVE THE SINS OF ANY, THEY ARE FORGIVEN THEM; IF YOU RETAIN THE SINS OF ANY, THEY ARE RETAINED." (JOHN 20:23-25)
- 4 "AND I WILL GIVE YOU A NEW HEART, AND I WILL PUT A NEW SPIRIT IN YOU. I WILL TAKE OUT YOUR STONY, STUBBORN HEART AND GIVE YOU A TENDER, RESPONSIVE HEART. AND I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT IN YOU SO THAT YOU WILL FOLLOW MY DECREES.." (EZEKIEL 36:26-27)

**[] STUDY AND LEARN THESE
VERSES. REALLY THINK
ABOUT WHAT THEY MEAN.**



REALITY CHECK: ARE YOU TRULY, PURELY DEVOTED?

How PURELY DEVOTED ARE YOU TO FOLLOWING CHRIST?

The #1 thing teens say they hate is someone who is a fake -- a hypocrite.

Yet, if you haven't given God your WHOLE heart, you can't honestly call yourself a follower of Christ.

Jesus said only the pure in heart would see God. (Matthew 5:8) and that you cannot serve two masters. You will hate one, and love the other. (Matthew 6:24) If you want to serve God, and truly follow Christ, you must give him ALL your heart, and stop dancing on the edge of commitment.

Something certain about people who dance on the edge - they are sure to fall off at some point--and it's usually a pretty bad fall.

So, how do you serve him with ALL your heart? First you must make a decision to break free of past, and start your new future. We can't still do the things we used to do, and expect to have the joy that comes from the gift of a new life in Christ. If you're trying to do both, that's why you're so miserable.

There is nothing we leave behind that is any good, compared to what we look forward to, if we will fully give our hearts to Him.

Begin by making sure you understand God's expectations. Galatians 5 gives some pretty specific instructions, and clear idea of which characteristics belong to which side:

13 For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love... 16 So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves.

17 The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions...

19 When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, 21 envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. 22 But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. 25 Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.

A LETTER TO GOD

Write a letter to God, telling Him all the places in your heart you are giving Him today. Tell Him how you plan to give him your whole heart, and follow His plan for your life, instead your own schemes.

Lined writing area for the letter to God.

Lined writing area for the letter to God.

IT'S NOT HARD TO SERVE GOD.

IT'S HARD TO SERVE GOD WITH A DIVIDED HEART.

ARE YOU HIS, OR ARE YOU NOT, HIS?

YOU HAVE TO MAKE A CHOICE, AND GO WITH IT -- WITH ALL OF YOUR HEART.

"THE PURE IN HEART SHALL SEE GOD."

--MATTHEW 5:8