

# Sexual Integrity

## The Center's Position on Sex and Contraception

**The center does not recommend or encourage the use of contraception.** Information about contraceptives is included as part of the abstinence curriculum for educational purposes only. The Center does not provide referrals for contraception for single clients. Married clients are referred to their medical practitioners or their pastors for advice on the use of contraception.

## Know the Truth

### How to Really Steer Clear of STDs

A recent review by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) determined that there is no clinical proof that condoms are effective in reducing the risk of STDs. The surest way to avoid infection is to practice sexual abstinence while single. When you marry, select a partner who is not infected with an STD and will remain sexually faithful during marriage.

### How to Avoid Unplanned Pregnancies

The United States has the highest teenage pregnancy rate of all developed countries.

About 1 million teenagers become pregnant each year; 95% of those pregnancies are unintended. These numbers would be much different if young people practiced abstinent lifestyles, the ONLY 100 percent effective way to prevent pregnancy.

Other birth control or family planning methods range in effectiveness from 74 to 99.95% effective and their effectiveness depends on how well the instructions are followed. This means that some unwanted pregnancies may occur while using a family planning or birth control method other than abstinence.

Waiting for marriage benefits children, parents, and society.

### Understand the Misgivings and Facts about Contraceptives

No method of contraception is 100 percent effective 100 percent of the time. They offer NO GUARANTEE, and MONEY BACK will not undo the consequences. Even if methods of protection are used to reduce risks of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, there is still a chance of becoming involved in a pregnancy or getting an infection.

Birth control may reduce the risk of pregnancy and infections, but it does not protect women from changed feelings about themselves and others. In addition, there are risks factors with some contraceptives.

Correspondent Steve Jordahl cautions women in his article, "Depo-Provera Puts Women at Risk". Depo-Provera, a widely accessible hormonal contraceptive has been determined to put women at greater risk of certain sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), according to the results of a study from the National Institutes of Health. "The report," Stevens explained, "showed pretty clearly that the

risk of chlamydia and gonorrhea, two sexually transmitted diseases, are increased with Depo-Provera."

### **Self-restraint is the Best Choice**

Individuals often confuse their need for closeness, touch, and affection with "being in love." "Being in love" can make sex out of marriage seem permissible, but it is not.

"Safer sex" doesn't protect you from feeling bad afterwards, or wishing you had waited. It is difficult for anyone to correctly predict the outcomes of sexual involvement.

Having sex does not necessarily make a relationship better.

Abstinence is absolutely, positively 100 percent effective in preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease 100 percent of the time.

The best way of not putting a relationship at risk is to avoid sexual involvement  
This means waiting for the committed relationship of marriage.

## **Know God's Position on Sex and Marriage**

In regard to sexual activity and relationships, the philosophy of The Center is in line with God's position of sexual abstinence until and within marriage.

Therefore, this philosophy is implemented on all levels of center operations including client counsel, school presentations, and the expected lifestyle of all volunteers and staff.

### **Biblical Stance**

The following scriptures clearly reveal God's perspective on marriage, sex, and standing against temptation:

- *"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)*
- *For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. (Eph 5:31)*
- *Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. (1Co 6: 18–20)*
- *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. (1Co 10:13)*

## Why Wait

Beyond pregnancy and STDs, this edited version by Matt Kaufman will help explain the ramifications of sex outside of God's perfect plan:

The primary reason premarital sex (regardless of age) is wrong is the same reason marital sex is right. It is important to know that sex can lead to pregnancy or disease, but it is far more important to know why sex is good in marriage, and no place else.

Far from being anti-sex, the Bible counts sex as precious precisely in the context of a lifelong union between man and woman. It is a closeness so great that God speaks of man and woman becoming "one flesh," and likens His love for His people to marital love, lavishly celebrated in an entire book of Scripture (Song of Songs) and portions of others (Revelation 19, for one).

- It is in marriage that sex finds its intended meaning of lifelong intimacy on every level.
- It is not only a good thing; it is a holy thing.
- It is intended to produce children.

The creation of life is one of the great earthly manifestations of the love of God. The loving life together of man and woman is meant to produce children bound to them in a great circle of love.

Sex outside of marriage is a sin in the sight of God. It takes something created to be holy and desecrates it.

Sex cannot be separated from God's order of creation. When we try to pretend otherwise, we're trying to make God go away so we can re-order creation to suit our own lusts or other emotional desires. We may try to tell ourselves we're expressing "love."

When we seek to slice sex off from the life of love — lasting marriage — and to have it on the side instead, we're actually expressing a type of hatred for our Creator. We are throwing the blessings He gave us back in His face, and demanding substitutes tailored to our preferences.

## Know and Identify Sexual Pressures

**Recognizing Pressures is partially from the State of Florida Website - edited version.** Managing sexual feelings and desires is one of the difficult skills that men and women have to learn. It is made harder by the different kinds of pressure an individual experiences - social pressures, internal pressures, and peer pressures.

### **SOCIAL PRESSURES**

These can present sex from many different sources. It is extremely important to guard one's mind, heart, eyes and ears.

Those you know who are having sex outside of marriage may not be revealing their full emotions.

- The behavior of others you know of all ages including your own family or friends can influence you in your sexual behavior.
- Many people do not share the negative impact, especially if it means admitting they have made a mistake.

The media's goal is to make money, not help you manage your sexual feelings in a positive or healthy way. Be careful and do not be fooled or misled by what you see and hear.

- They make it seem as if sex is the important part of entering a relationship.
- They say it is OK to use sex to meet your own needs without regard of others.
- They use sport heroes and movie stars to advertise their products and project a sexual image as though to say, "You should live in my little "g" god image. If sexual encounters are good for me, they must be good for you".
- They don't give a true picture of the consequences of having sex. How many times have you seen or heard characters discuss the genital warts they got from sex?

Many social pressures today say far more unmarried people having "great" sex than are married people. But a national study showed those people most satisfied with their sex lives were married.

## **PEER PRESSURE**

Friends are important but they can make you think you won't be cool or accepted if you don't think like they think or act like they act. . However, it is important for you to make your own decisions and not be pressured by your friends into doing something you don't want to do. You are the one who will have to live with the consequences of your decisions.

It also is important for you to develop your own beliefs and stick to them because ultimately you are responsible for your own behavior. Your friends can be supportive for acting in positive or negative ways. Part of growing up is learning which is good peer pressure and which is not. Boys often are pressured more about sex than girls. They should never confuse having sex with being a man.

No one has the right to coerce another person to have sex or do anything that they do not approve. If someone has attempted or forced you to have sex:

- TELL someone you trust.
- GET HELP from a counselor.
- UNDERSTAND it is not your fault.

## **SUBSTANCE PRESSURES**

Using drugs or alcohol can drastically influence the decision making process. This causes an overwhelming number of individuals to become sexual.

- These limit your ability to think and make good decisions.
- These can take your focus away from protecting yourself.
- These often lead to unwanted consequences.

## **INTERNAL PRESSURES**

Having sexual feelings and desires are a normal part of life from the teen years. They are very real. They are very powerful. These can be driven by both physical and emotional desires to fulfill a need.

A big factor that leads people to have sex outside of marriage is low self-esteem.

- Many feel they should give into the pressures of sex not to hurt anyone's feelings
- Many feel it is something they "should just do."
- Many are searching for love in all the wrong places.

Some confuse affection and feeling cared about with "love." Sex and love are not the same thing. When people feel they are in love, sex may seem more acceptable. Guard against being misled about what true love is.

## **Yielding To Pressures**

Everyone must understand that the choices made today will absolutely affect the future. Even more important is understanding the future is far more important than impressing or pleasing someone else today.

## **Know Ways to Resist Temptation**

The Center provides Sexual Pressures vs Integrity information as a tool for the client. It gives practical ways to choose sexual integrity and practice abstinence before marriage. Hopefully this will encourage her to stay true to herself and God.

### **MAKE A FIRM DECISION**

Know what you think and how you feel.

- Intimacy takes many forms.
- Intercourse is not the only or best way to show somebody the depth of your feelings.

Stick to your values and make decisions based on your best interest.

### **DECLARE YOUR INTENT TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS**

State your reasons for waiting. Be prepared for questions and/or objections. Stay true to yourself and your stated feelings. Calmly explain why you choose abstinence. List ALL of your reasons be they religious, moral, personal or situational. State firmly that you are not willing to take the risk or pay the consequences.

- Make it clear to your boyfriend about your desires to wait. Discuss sexual pressures you both feel and ways to handle them. If you don't plan on having sex until you are married, say so.
- Tell other people the depth of your commitment to abstinence. There is no reason for you to down play how you feel about sex. Honesty is best.
- Remind others that decisions about sex are personal.

Hang out with those who respect your decision.

### **SAY NO, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT!**

Avoid situations where you might be tempted to have sex.

Don't get tricked into giving excuses or reasons. Take a deep breath and say these words, "NO, I DO NOT WANT TO HAVE SEX". It is never too late to stop and say "NO" even if you have gone pretty far.

- If you have had sex before don't let the other person use this to bully you into it now, just because you have done it before doesn't mean you have to do it every time you are asked.

- If you kiss somebody passionately or get into heavy fooling around this does not mean that you have to go all the way and it does not make you a tease. Emphasize your words with actions. Even if you feel you have led the other person on. Even if you feel urges to go further.
- If the other person keeps on pressing, say "No!" again. You may have to say this more than once to make them see you are serious. Draw the line firmly and if the other person doesn't appear to be getting it, leave.

Do not try to diffuse the tension with lots of kissing and/or other physical gestures; this will confuse your message of "No!" Don't give the other person an opportunity to try to talk you out of your decision.

- If the other person pulls the old "If you loved me you'd do it" line retort with "If you loved me you'd wait". Sex is not a test of your love or feelings for another person and saying "No!" to sex does not mean you have failed to show your love. Saying "NO" to sex can be the best way to say, "I love you." People know they are loved by caring words and actions, not by having sex. If it takes sex to hold this relationship together, it is probably destined for trouble anyway. Silence the temptation by not listening.

Don't put yourself in a position of becoming a date rape victim. GO OUT ONLY with someone you trust. AVOID going places where assault could occur. GO where there are other people.

- Resist if you feel threatened. If coerced or forced to have sex: SAY "No!"
- Physically push them away and leave
- YELL for help if necessary.

## **CHERISH YOUR FREEDOM!**

Choosing Abstinence Allows You to be FREE: from being used or exploited, feeling demoralized; from the responsibilities of untimely parenting; from knowing that you have damaged your (or someone else's) reproductive health.

Choosing Abstinence Allows You To be FREE: to have an open relationship with your parents; to respect yourself and others; to get to know another person without the complication of sex; to pursue life goals; to marry and remain faithful to your mate.

## **ACCEPT RESTORED VIRGINITY**

Spiritual rebirth doesn't destroy the past. It transforms it. A second chance, spiritually, means there are no limitations to what you can become.

- This is the truth of 1 John 1:9, where God promises to forgive us and cleanse us when we confess our sins to him.
- This is the truth of Jeremiah 31:34, where God promises to forget your sins ... forever.

Jesus replied, "*So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.*" John 8: 34

## **Know Ways to Resist Pressures**

Self-esteem can help individuals say no to sex, and yes to abstinence until marriage. In a world where peer pressure and the desire to be "loved" are such strong forces, self-esteem can be a lifeline. When people feel good about themselves, they are less likely to behave in ways that might hurt them.

Even though people with high self-esteem will still make mistakes, they are more likely to learn from them. It is up to you to make the right choice for you. So have the confidence to make that right decision.

You need to know how to handle feelings so as not to feel pressured to act on them. One way is to firmly "talk back" to the pressures and remind yourself of the risks:

- To reject God's plan for your life will cause you to have less than His best
- A wrong decision can lead to a crisis unplanned pregnancy or STD
- An action to satisfy the flesh can lead to a broken heart
- The consequences of sex outside of marriage far outweigh any momentary pleasure.

## Know God's Plan for Restored Virginity

This edited article titled "You Can Become a Virgin Again?" by Tim Stafford offers great tools for walking a person through the hope and reality of restored virginity.

If you are not a virgin you can still choose abstinence with pride. You are not a hypocrite if you say yes one time and no another, even if it is to the same person.

If you are not a virgin, you can receive restoration. It may sound ridiculous. Become a virgin again? Why not ask to relive last week?

If you've had sex, you may be saying, "I've asked for forgiveness." "Now please tell me how to answer people who want to know if I am a virgin." Maybe the best answer to the question is not to answer, "Are you a virgin?" with "None of your business."

The important questions are those you ask yourself. If you want to start over, is it possible? Can you be a virgin again?

- A man once posed a similar question to Jesus: "*How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?*" (John 3:4)
- Jesus answered by talking about a second, spiritual birth. "*Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives new life from heaven*" (John 3:6).

You can lose your physical virginity just once. If you did it, you did it. You can't get that first time back again. And the past carries with it physical and emotional consequences. If memories have been etched on your brain, you can't pretend they're gone. But spiritually, it is quite possible to start all over again.

Spiritual rebirth doesn't destroy the past. It transforms it. A second chance, spiritually, means there are no limitations to what you can become. The God who made the universe out of nothing can take your past and make from it something beautiful. The apostle Paul talked about this transformation when he wrote the previous verses to a group of Christians in Greece. They had plenty in their past to regret. But because they trusted Jesus to redeem them, the past had been transformed:

How do you begin that kind of transformation? You can't manage it on your own.

- You need God's power and forgiveness.
- And where do you find that? You ask for it.
- Spiritual transformation begins as simply and as mysteriously as that.
- You ask, admitting your need.
- And God goes to work in your life.

So when you've stopped having sex and asked for forgiveness, can you call yourself a virgin?

- Perhaps you are no longer a virgin in the physical sense.
- But because God has purified you, you are virgin in his eyes.
- That may not clear up your reputation or your memory.
- But it does clear up your future with God.
- You are as good as new.

Once you've experienced God's forgiveness, you'll still have to deal with the leftovers of your past, like guilt. Feelings of guilt are your internal, emotional response. They are not always reliable.

- What we call a guilty conscience is often a mix of feelings: regret, loss, sadness, and self-reproach.
- These are natural feelings for someone who's been heavily, emotionally involved in a sexual relationship. The sense of guilt won't instantly change.
- Like other natural consequences-pregnancy, disease, or painful memories-feelings don't necessarily disappear when God transforms your life. But their sting is taken away.
- So, even though you may still feel guilty, it's vital to know that, as far as God's concerned, you're not guilty.
- This is the truth of 1 John 1:9, where God promises to forgive us and cleanse us when we confess our sins to him. And this is the truth of Jeremiah 31:34, where God promises to forget your sins ... forever. Jesus did not die on the cross to take away your feelings. He died to take away your sins. Cleansed of sin, you can let God work on transforming your feelings into useful tools for His service.

Jesus set us free that we might receive all the blessings of His righteousness.

- *Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." John 8: 34*