

Why I keep saying “no” to sex

by Leah Holder

When I was 17 years old, I liked to hang out with the other teenagers in my neighborhood. We would talk for hours, and I enjoyed our conversations. Yet one day, my conversation with one of the guys made me feel uncomfortable. He kept making comments about us having sex in the near future. I finally stopped him and said, “No, I’m not having sex with you.”

“What’s wrong with me?” he responded.

I gave it to him straight saying, “I’m not having sex with anyone before marriage. I want to be sexually pure.”

This guy looked at me as though I was an alien from outer space, and then he asked me a short but loaded question.

“Why?”

Now, at age 25, I keep saying “no” to this culture’s rules for sex, and people keep asking me “why?”

Such a high cost

Well, for starters, playing by this culture’s rules for sex has a high cost. Many people, including some who identify themselves as Christians, experience the devastating effects of sexual activity outside of marriage. These can include guilt, depression, unwanted pregnancies, family problems and even legal and medical issues.

I once heard a pastor explain that failing to live sexually pure can be more costly than failing in other areas of our lives, because we can fully recover from those other kinds of failures. For example, financially, you and I could lose all of our money at one point, and

later on become millionaires. Educationally, you and I could drop out of school at one time, and then later earn GEDs, Masters Degrees and Doctorate degrees. Professionally, you and I could get fired at one point, and later on become presidents or CEOs. However, sexual purity failures pack more devastating blows to our lives. Sexual purity failures can cause wounds that no amount of money, no degree and no accomplishment can heal.

Staying within God's boundaries

I desperately want you to understand that God created sex, and he actually does want us to enjoy it. But he wants us to enjoy it within his boundaries. His boundary for sex is marriage, period. Is that because God wants to ruin our fun? Not at all!

God wants us to stay within his boundaries for the same reason my grandma wanted my dad and his brothers to stay inside the fence around their house. "Don't y'all go out there!" she would warn them. My dad grew up in a gang-infested area on the south side of Chicago. The other side of the fence seemed fun to him and his brothers, but my grandma could see things they couldn't. She could see the harm and danger that awaited them on the other side of that fence, and she wanted to protect her children.

This world makes sex outside of marriage look so glamorous in all the movies and shows and music videos. So like my dad and uncles, many of us think the world's side of the fence looks fun. But like my grandma, God can see things we can't. He knows the harm and danger that await us if we have sex the world's way, and he wants to protect us, his children.

Many people associate God's boundaries with bondage. The irony is that the complete opposite is true: God's will is actually the most liberating and satisfying place to be. It wasn't until I truly pursued purity—in mind, body, and heart—that I experienced a new level of intimacy and peace with God. After this experience, I never wanted to go back to the way I used to live! I learned that living sexually pure isn't about exercising our willpower, feeling

better about ourselves, or any other self-centered reason. It's about honoring God with holy lives. It's about giving all of ourselves to the One who gave us all of himself.

A heart that says “yes!” to God’s way

I encourage you to begin or continue living sexually pure. If you've failed in this area of sexual purity, please know that God still loves you, and you can decide to submit this area of your life to him. I have wrestled with sexual purity too, but I find victory through Christ Jesus. By his grace, I am a virgin who has not even kissed a guy. It has not been easy. In fact, it has been downright difficult at times. And I'm quite aware that my greatest temptations to give in may be ahead of me. Even so, I'm fully convinced that God's way for sex is the best way, and my heart longs to say “yes” to his way. That's precisely why I keep saying “no” to our culture's way.

I have lived in Texas since I was seven years old, and I possess my fair share of Texas pride. In addition to football and big stuff, we Texans take pride in our private property. It is common to see signs that read NO TRESPASSING. In fact, property owners can legally shoot people who do trespass on their property. I told you, we value our property down here!

God carefully created us in our mothers' wombs (Psalm 139:13). He bought us at a price (1 Cor. 6:20). We are his private property. We are his precious masterpieces. As we begin or continue our sexual purity journeys, I encourage us to tell all the sexual impurity in this world NO TRESPASSING— No trespassing on our minds, no trespassing on our bodies, and no trespassing on our hearts. After all, to say “no” to the world's way is to say “yes” to God's way.

And God's way is the best way.