

# Purity's Big Payoff / Premarital Sex is a Big Rip-off

*Edited by Donna Lee Schillinger*



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An imprint of The Quilldriver  
Clarksville, Ark.

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edited by Donna Lee Schillinger  
Cover Design by Daniela Bermudez and Line of Thought Studio

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Ark., U.S.A.

EAN: 9780979163920 ISBN 0979163927

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Publisher's Cataloging-in-Publication data

Schillinger, Donna Lee.

Purity's big payoff : premarital sex is a big rip-off / edited by Donna Lee Schillinger.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-0-9791639-8-2

1. Sex --Religious aspects --Christianity. 2. Sexual ethics. 3. Marriage. 4. Single people. 5. Christian life. 6. Dating (Social customs). 7. Love. I. Title.

BT708 .S295 2011

261.8/35 --22

2010918801



*In Memory of  
Hunter  
and All that He Represents*

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# Purity? Yes! It is possible

*by Donna Lee Schillinger*



I haven't watched network television on a regular basis since 1995, but one week back in the late 1990s, my aunt rented a condo at the beach, not too far from my home. She invited me to come over each day after I got off work and she fed me a home-cooked meal and then we would just kick our feet up and watch primetime network television for a couple of hours.

From the first evening, I was shocked by how many images of sex and violence I was seeing – not only in the shows, but in the commercials too. I had only been TV-free for a couple of years – and it's also important to note that I was not living according to God's will at that time – nonetheless, by the end of the week, I felt like I needed to detoxify my mind from all the crap it had taken in. I had ingested more im-

ages of sex and violence than in the previous three TV-free years combined.

The violence I saw on TV may have evoked some emotions that would need to find an outlet sooner or later — fear, unrest, anger — but I wasn't too concerned about actually becoming violent. I haven't been in a fist fight since grade school and only once in my adult life have I been attacked in such a way that I could have used some pent-up aggression to unleash. No doubt, there's violence in real life, but if I stay out of certain circles, I can avoid most of it. As Americans we are truly blessed to be able to expect a life largely free of violence. I can watch it on TV every night, but I am still not tempted to become a superhero or a vigilante.

Sex, on the other hand, is not only a great temptation in real life, it's as readily available as I want it to be. Don't try this at home, but the sad truth is that a guy or girl can get laid tonight if determined to do so. I don't care what you look like or how you smell or whether you even have a dime to your name — you can get you some! All you have to do is place yourself in the right situation, and that's not hard to do. If you're a guy with money, you can purchase your sexual experience on a street corner in just about any city. Girls wanting to buy sex will have a little more of a challenge — but if you're a girl, why in the world would you pay for sex? All you have to do is make your way to the grungiest dive you dare to set foot in and belly up to the bar. Order water if you have no money and just wait. You might have to make googly-eyes at someone. If you want to increase your odds, just ogle the creepiest looking guy in the joint. If you're willing, sex will happen.

You think I'm joking, after all, this is a book about purity (yes, you did open to the purity side of the book), but I'm not. Those are the extremes to which a person can go to get sex on demand, but most of us don't have to go to those extremes. If we have a significant other, we can have sex. Even if our significant other lives in England and we've never met him or her, we can have chat sex or webcam sex or Skype sex. And if we have trouble meeting people, we can just have sex with prompts and toys — pornographic books, magazines, videos and sex gadgets. Unlike violence, sex is readily available in my real life and yours and it is trying to draw me to it at every turn, starting with television commercials.

The single-most difficult task in the life of a young person trying to live a Christian life today is maintaining purity until marriage. I'm betting you've already learned this for yourself or at least realized it on an intellectual level. That's probably why you're reading this book. You know you've got a huge challenge ahead and you need encouragement. You've come to the right place.

Next to conversation with God, there is nothing more encouraging than the success stories of people who have gone through the same challenges

you're facing. Yes, it's nearly impossible to remain pure, but YES! It is possible!

I am so pleased to introduce to you eight wonderful stories from people just like you who faced the challenge of purity and were victorious. And I'm even more pleased to tell you that these stories have fairytale endings — that's right — they live happily ever after.

I am privileged to know personally a few couples who waited for marriage to have sex (maybe I know more, but I'm just not privy to that sort of 411), and they are without a doubt the happiest married couples I know. That's not to say that only marriages of virgins can work out. Let's be real; plenty of people who had sex before marriage are happily married. In fact, we have stories on both sides of this book of blended marriages (if you will) between virgins and nonvirgins, which also have happily-ever-after endings. Coming to marriage pure is not the only way to have a successful marriage, and it's not a sure-fire method either. So what's the advantage to purity?

Beyond the obvious advantages of never having to lose a moment's sleep worrying about unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, saving yourself for one awesome sexual experience on your wedding night has the big payoff of permanently bonding you to your spouse.

Because God made woman from man (Genesis 2:23), He designed us to come back together. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). So, no, in case you're wondering, there's nothing wrong with you for so desperately longing for a mate! That's a desire God gave you — to find a person to return to, with whom to bond and become one. That is God's perfect will for a man and woman, and that's why He established marriage.

It's your life — how do you want it? You can have an average life, flounder around, learn by trial and error, get your heart broken, maybe break a few yourself and eventually meet that special someone, settle down, have some kids, and you've

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ter if you have  
no money and  
just wait.

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got about a 40 percent chance of that working out for you. Those aren't bad odds; if I heard there was going to be a 40 percent chance of rain, I'd take an umbrella.

Or, you can have the best life, experiencing love and sex as our Creator intended — an experience so incredibly strong that you don't even feel whole without your mate.

That sounds awesome to me. And I would like to be able to describe it better, but I'm at a loss for words. Not because it's indescribable, but because I have not had that personal experience and therefore can only garner second-hand information, from stories like the ones in this book, about that kind of love. I can only imagine what it must be like to look at my husband and be overcome with marital bliss, as God intended. I will never know what God's perfect will in marriage feels like, because I didn't take that route.

I am happily married, let me just say that upfront, but seven years and counting and I'm still working on that "one flesh" thing. My husband and I are not properly bonded, and it's our past sexual experiences that have disabled us in this regard. We have memories that we can't erase, we have basis for comparison, we have loved others. I believe that God has provided a remedy for our situation and with much surrender to Him and diligent spiritual development, my husband and I may some day become one.

And yet for the couple that uses their first sexual experience to bond them, that "one flesh" thing comes effortlessly — just as God intended. It's as easy, enjoyable and immediate as having sex. This is the big payoff. For your wait, for your effort to remain pure, for your victory, you get the privilege of instant bonding to your spouse. And that's a payoff that keeps on paying in years of happy marriage, in unity in parenting, in setting an example for your own children as they aspire to purity and in your own defense as the Enemy seeks to destroy your marriage (and he will; it's what he does to marriages).

Purity is worth the effort. But wait, what is purity? Just not having sex before marriage, right? No intercourse? Or does oral sex count? What about phone sex? There's not even any physical contact there.

In Matthew 5, Jesus sets this boundary for purity: "I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

Yikes, that's a pretty high standard. But let's not confuse sexual desire with lust. You can most certainly come to the marriage altar full of sexual desire for your future spouse without having "committed adultery" with him or her in your heart. Lust then, is a selfish sexual desire that is outside of God's will for your life. That sexual desire you feel for your

future mate can be pure if you are keeping it in check with God's will for your life, or it can be lust if you're allowing it to remove you from God's will for your life. Thus, how far short of intercourse you can go and still be pure becomes a personal matter between you and God.

You must know though, that once you decide on a boundary for yourself, you will arrive at — and push — that boundary. If you determine that anything short of intercourse is not sex, don't be surprised to look back at your life to realize you did everything short of sex. If you decide that anything with clothes on is OK, you will find all kinds of things to do with clothes on. If you decide that kissing is your limit — kiss you will, and aplenty! If you decide that only holding hands is acceptable, then you'll have some sweaty palms! Boundaries are everywhere in God's law and in nature. A key strategy to your success in remaining pure until marriage is to set yourself some boundaries and then never, ever, I repeat never (you read me right, I said *never*) cross them. If you do, you will find that you have taken the first step down a slippery slope that will land you into the mire of regret — which lasts a lifetime.

Whether or not you have already set boundaries for yourself, I hope that as you read both sides of this book, you'll look for the theme of boundaries. When the individual defined sex as intercourse only, inevitably, things went right up to that point — and you should take careful note of how they felt about that with some time to reflect. And for those who held the standard high and said they would not kiss until their wedding day, they also hit the nail on the head. Others set boundaries, didn't respect them, regretted that, set new boundaries, didn't respect them... and on went the vicious downward cycle.

This collection of stories about love that waited holds no secret formula for success. I'm so sorry to say that there is no sure-fire way to avoid sexual temptation. If there ever had been such a thing (the chastity belt was a good try), Satan would have devised a way around it.

Remaining pure is a personal challenge that you have to meet in a unique way in partnership with the Holy Trinity. The foundation of your effort must be a strong relationship with God — this is the only constant, in successfully remaining pure, from one story to the next. Without God's help, purity is a lost cause.

The good news is that God is so very willing to help, not just by providing instruction and encouragement in His word, but in very real ways. God constantly cares for us and if you ask God to help you remain pure, He will be faithful to do that. Keep asking too, it shouldn't be a one-time prayer. Instead, be like that woman who bugged the judge so much that he said, "Fine, I'll give you what you want just so you'll stop bugging me!" (Luke 18:3-5). Our Heavenly Father wants us to succeed — it

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brings Him great joy for you and your spouse to be a partnership that can bring Him glory. And so He will do very practical things to help you out if you ask — little things that seem like coincidence, such as a police officer pulling up beside your parked car at just the point when you really should be getting out of that car. And big things — like removing up and out of your life in an unexpected instant that person who is tempting you beyond your ability to resist. If you were to take note of the special helps — actually log them — you'd see that these interventions mount up to nothing short of miraculous.

Resisting sex in our sex-driven society is just that — miraculous. It's Christlike nonconformity born of a desire to bring glory to God in every aspect of your life. It's not born of paternalistic oppression — not in our day in Western civilized countries anyway. As I've noted already, we have the freedom and access to sex if we want it. Whereas we should be thankful for all our freedoms, we should also use wisdom and discernment in exercising them. We need to look beyond the moment of pleasure and instant gratification to the consequences of exercising those freedoms. Today, purity is being prudent, not being a prude.

Regardless of how feminists and traditionalists may want to use purity as a case in some sociological point, for you and me and every single person who is trying to live according to God's will for our lives, purity is a very personal issue, a personal challenge and when accomplished, a personal victory with personal rewards.