



Your 21 Day Guide to Sexual Purity

By Cheri Thompson

Unless noted otherwise, all scripture notations are taken from the *King James Version* (KJV) of the Bible.

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DEDICATION

First to my Master, Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who enables me to do the impossible. Next, to my brother and sisters struggling with the sheets: you can do all things through Christ. Remember, what He has done for others, He'll do for YOU!

THANK YOU!

To my brothers, Pastor LC Bledsoe and Ed Jordan--thanks for ALWAYS honoring God and your wives--even if we are the only 2 people in the room.

INSTRUCTIONS

This manual has been developed using a simple **A B C** format:

Activity: a task that you will need to complete.

Belief: a daily scriptural reference to meditate.

Confession: what you must speak into existence.

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INTRODUCTION

Another hectic day, I thought as I ran to catch the train. Thus far, I'd managed to get up early enough to have my devotion time, get my daughter fed and ready for school, drive her to school and drive the 30 minutes to the train station; surely I wouldn't get this far and miss the train. That would mean I'd have to wait 1.5 hours for the next train or drive 2.5 hours through rush-hour traffic, and I'd definitely be late for the interview.

The interview...had I remembered to grab the documents I'd printed about the company? I knew nothing about the company except that they were looking for someone for an upcoming training project. I exchanged emails with the person I was to meet with, and he'd readily asked for the interview.

The conductor smiled and motioned for me to hurry. Once seated, I frantically looked through my portfolio and breathed a sigh of relief upon finding the printout of the company's information. I hadn't been downtown Chicago for a while, and I was looking forward to the change of scenery. I occasionally enjoyed the busy pace of the city in vast contrast to the suburbs; the hurried walkers, drivers oblivious to pedestrians, honking horns and the frantic hustle and bustle.

Enough daydreaming, I thought, as I focused my attention on the documents. As I read over the company's profile, I noticed that the person I was to interview with was the owner. *Must be a small company*, I thought. I also noticed how closely the profile matched that of my company; however, based on the address (Magnificent Mile), they couldn't possibly be as small as my company, because I was still able to work out of my home office.

I made the final adjustments to my work samples as the train pulled into Union Station on schedule; I had twenty minutes to get to my destination, so I picked up my pace and walked the few blocks with enough time to run to the ladies room and freshen up before the interview.

The office was spacious with wonderful views, and I could tell from the boxes that they had either just moved in or were preparing to move out. The receptionist offered me something to drink, and said she'd let Mr. X know I was here. I carefully selected the "right" magazine before taking my seat and noticed this FINE brother going into a corner office. *I sure hope I have to pass his office on my way to my interviewer's office*, I thought.

Amazing how the mind only needs a quick glimpse in order to burn a lasting image. Although I was flipping through the magazine, anyone observing would have known I wasn't reading or looking at the pictures...my mind was replaying the image of Mr. FINE. Was that tall handsome man standing at his office window taking in the awesome view? Or was he posed behind his desk on a business call? Or was he running his hand through his thick, dark hair figuring out a business problem. I was so consumed with my thoughts that I didn't notice Mr. X standing in front of me, with his hand extended, saying "Hello, Ms. Thompson". *Lord, have mercy*; my interviewer is that FINE brother from the corner office.



Since we hadn't spoken over the phone, I had no clue as to his ethnicity, but Mr. Fine was the owner of the company. I managed to pull myself together enough to look him in the eye and firmly shake his hand, but I knew my flesh was in trouble. He took me to the office I'd seen him going into only a few minutes earlier, and he partially closed the door.

We started off very professionally; however, the tone of the interview quickly became relaxed because our backgrounds were so similar. After spending over twenty years in corporate, he launched the company three years prior. He was pursuing both government and commercial contracts and they had just moved to the current location a week ago. Our conversation was so in synch that we found ourselves saying the same words at the same time and finishing one another's sentences. We knew several people in common, and we literally began laughing out loud as we discussed one individual in particular and how our perception of her was the same...we both thought she was psychologically challenged in the worst way. Our laughter was so loud that it sounded like a party, so a couple of people "peeked in" to see what was going on. Fortunately, I didn't have to use any brain energy because my mind was NOT on the interview or our conversations. I was engrossed in the man himself. It is one thing to see a good looking man, but to add a body and brain to the equation was really more than I had anticipated. And it is because of the events of that day that I learned to manage my thought life by thinking on things that are true, honest, lovely, and of good report (Phil 4:8).

My mind had moved on to one of those scenes you see in a movie, where the couple clears the desk with one swoop of the arm and....you know the rest. I'm not sure when the thought occurred to him, but we both looked at the partially open office door at the same time. He asked if he should close the door, and my flesh wanted to scream "Do you need an engraved invitation?" I didn't even answer him because I'm not sure what would have come out of my mouth. I stood up, grabbed my belongings and practically ran out of his office. He was on my heels before I reached the receptionist's area. Once I was out of his office, I felt a bit more in control, and I realized how "psychologically challenged" I must have appeared, so I slowed my pace a bit. He said, "We didn't get around to the personal stuff, but are you married?" I replied a weak, "Yes", and resisted the urge to add, "*But I'm going through a divorce*". I managed to say, it wasn't the right opportunity for me and proceeded to the elevator.

Once back on the ground level of the office complex, my emotions began to settle down, so I sat down to compose myself. *What had I almost allowed to happen? Was I losing my mind...on a desk?* I didn't even have that temptation before I was saved, what in the world was happening to me? My legs were still too weak to walk back to the train so I called one of my girls. I knew that I needed to "tell on myself", because sin loves secrecy. I told her everything (including the desk). It was then that I saw that if I was going to be successful with celibacy, I needed to change my associations.

I made a conscious decision that day; I chose to live a celibate life. I had heard about people who abstained from sex outside of marriage, but I had no examples of people who lived this way. In fact, my circle saw no problem with sleeping with someone they were in a relationship with, and most of them confess Christianity. I knew I had an uphill battle ahead of me, but I dug my heels into "The Rock" and started my climb.

In this practical guide, I walk you through the steps that I have taken on my journey of celibacy. Think of this as a success plan. Remember, he who doesn't have a plan, is planning to fail. For the next 21 days, I am your Accountability Partner (AP), and my job is to help you succeed at celibacy. There are only a few things I need from you in order to fulfill my job. I need your commitment, honesty and willingness to succeed. If you'll give me those things, you too can live a celibate life.

Let's begin.

Day 1: Evaluate Your Associations

I learned many lessons from the “nearly fatal” desk incident, but one of the most profound was the need to change my associations because no one I told about the incident (all Christians) had the right response. The first person said, “Since you’re both in the same business, this might be God showing you your next husband.” Another sister said, “Girl, you’re better than me because we would have been all over that desk.” A third sister repeated what the first two said and added, “What are you going to do if he contacts you again?” First, I was in the middle of a divorce, and husband number two was the furthest thing from my mind. So to minimize his contacting me, I blocked his email address.

Have you ever heard the phrase, “Show me your friends and I’ll show you your future?” Or “birds of a feather flock together?” It was very obvious that my current associations made me more vulnerable, and if I were going to be successful at celibacy, I needed to surround myself with those who were *already* successful with celibacy.

Don’t know anyone? I knew you would come up with that excuse too, so here’s your first activity.

Activity

Identify three resources related to celibacy. From podcasts, blogs and books, celibacy is on the rise and practiced more than you may realize. So don’t allow anyone to make you feel like the lone ranger. I have started compiling a list of resources for you; however, your assignment is to identify at least three other resources. How? If you have access to the internet, conduct online searches using keywords like, “abstinence” or “celibate”. Visit your local library and research articles and publications on the subject. Join a singles ministry at church; although this is not an indicator that all church singles practice celibacy, it could be an avenue to identify like-minded people.

I provided some FREE online resources to get you started.

These links were accessed 5/25/2008:

http://www.godtube.com/view_video.php?viewkey=86ff9a0a988e4ed93069

http://www.godtube.com/view_video.php?viewkey=fc3a4a4e0fd73846d429

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1571/is_4_18/ai_82651668

Belief

Proverbs 12:26 - The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray. (NKJV)

Confession

Heavenly Father,

I want to be successful at celibacy so bring the right associations into my life. I need people who are already successful with celibacy so that I can learn from them and grow. In Jesus Name I pray, Amen.

p.s. Now watch for them; they may not look like you think a celibate person looks but their lifestyle reflects the nature of God.

Day 2: Brand New YOU

I have the privilege of facilitating corporate group sessions to help teams identify their brand, and I always start the session by asking, “What comes to mind when someone says Bill Gates?” Of course, the majority of the group answers Microsoft. Why? Bill Gates is Microsoft’s world-renown Chairman. My definition for a brand is the first thing that your mind refers to when a person or thing is mentioned.

What’s your brand? What do people readily think of when your name is mentioned?

- Kind or cruel?
- Friendly or hard to get along with?
- Easy or worth the wait?

I am not a proponent of making decisions based on what someone thinks about you, but I am a proponent of self-examination. I also know that some truths can often be found among perceptions. Remember, the Samaritan woman who met Jesus in John 4:19? She said, “*Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.*”

As I’m facilitating, I ask the group to complete an exercise that describes the team. Whether they provide a product or service, everyone lists one word that describes the team. Next, we list of one word that the team would like to be perceived as. This exercise helps the team to start identifying their brand....*how they are versus how they want to be perceived.*

These exercises are challenging and time-consuming, but I get the opportunity to observe the team’s dynamics; how they interact with one another, how they handle disagreements and how they function together; even if dysfunctional.

I’d like for you to complete this exercise for yourself by answering the following:

Activity

How does the opposite sex perceive me? (You can ask someone to help answer this question, if necessary)

How do I want the opposite sex to perceive me?



We are already a brand; however, some of us might not like what readily comes to mind when people think about us.

We can change how people perceive us by changing our behaviors. For example, I want people to respect me; therefore, I exhibit behavior worthy of respect. This enables me to set clear boundary lines if someone behaves disrespectfully towards me because that goes against my *brand*.

Decide today what your brand is, then exemplify behavior that reinforces how you want to be perceived.

Belief

Romans 6:18: I am being made free from sin, and am becoming a servant of righteousness.

Confession

Father God,

Your Word says that I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus; therefore, as I read your Word, let my thinking and my behavior be right in your sight. In Jesus Name I pray, Amen.

Day 3: Choose to Live a Celibate Life

Everything begins with a decision. Some minor decisions, such as what you like to eat or wear, are not costly; however, the wrong major decision might cost you—more than you ever wanted to pay. Your life today is the result of the decisions you made in your yesterdays.

I am in awe over the *power of choice*. Being able to choose is empowering, and making Godly choices is life transforming. Studying scripture gave me my first glimpse into the power of choice. *The Lord thy God shall choose* is written sixteen times. Even God has to make choices; and YOU are one of His great choices. **Deuteronomy 7:6, For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.**

Now that you have identified your brand, let’s choose the lifestyle that supports your brand. Below you have blank spaces in each column to list personal benefits of a celibate life vs. fornicating life. Check the benefits in each column as applicable for you. In the left column check the items that are benefits for you, and write the benefits of a fornicating life in the right column.

Activity

Benefits of a Celibate Life	Benefits of a Fornicating Life
<input type="checkbox"/> God commands this and he knows what is best for me. <input type="checkbox"/> I will not contract an STD or other sexual-related disease. <input type="checkbox"/> A celibate lifestyle supports my brand. <input type="checkbox"/> I am breaking a generation curse in my family line by living a celibate life. <input type="checkbox"/> I will not have children out of wedlock. <input type="checkbox"/> My children will know how to live a celibate life. <input type="checkbox"/> A celibate life improves my self-esteem, value and self-worth. <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____

Although I am not able to see your selections in the second column, it is most important that you see them. Let’s review your choices. Please ask yourself, *“Who does this choice benefit?”* If they are not direct benefits to you, you might want to reconsider. Which column has the greater benefits?

Your future will be the result of decisions you make today. Choose to live a celibate life.

Belief

Deut 30:19: I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curing; therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may life.

Confession

Father God,

I really do desire to be like you in words and deeds so help me to make Godly choices. I ask that the Holy Spirit will alert me when my choices do not line up with your word and your will.

Day 4: Become Wise

God is interested in everything that concerns you, and when you leave Him out of your daily interactions, you go through the day relying upon self. He wants to be included in everything that affects you--your work, your studies, your interactions with people—anything you do and everywhere you go. Nothing is off limits with God because he wants to perfect that which concerns you—Psalms 138:8

Let's say I showed up at your home unexpectedly. Now close your eyes and picture each room in your home. Which rooms would you allow me to enter? The living room is generally our 'presentation room' so it would likely be a good place to start. I might also be permitted into your family room because having others around might help make my unannounced visit more comfortable. But what about the kitchen? And if I had to use your restroom, would you need to go in before me to tidy up? The one room that would be 'off-limit' for most of us is *the bedroom*.

Friends, this is exactly how we treat God. We want to invite him into the 'rooms' of our lives that we feel are presentable, but we want to keep him out of those rooms that are not in order. Do you really believe that God closes His eyes when you're in the bedroom? Certainly not—and it is our 'No Access' sign that restricts God from helping us in challenging areas.

I learned this by watching a particular minister that I know. He can get up on Sundays and preach, what he believes to be a powerful message, leave church and return to his fornicating lifestyle. Why? For him, God is permitted into his church life, but restricted from the other areas of his life. *God made me this way and men have needs*, he rationalizes.

We don't give God full access into our lives because we don't trust Him. While I might have restricted access to certain rooms on my first visit to your home, the more frequent my visits, the more access I'll be granted. After we've developed enough of a relationship, there wouldn't be any room off-limit to me. Similarly is your relationship with God. Spend more time with him by reading His Word, talking to him and investing time to build your relationship.

Sit on your bed and talk to God. Admit that you know what takes place in your bed is wrong and ask for His help. A future lesson in this book will help you avoid getting to the bedroom stage, but if you're already there, God will meet you just where you are. Once you develop an intimate relationship with Him, the bedroom becomes your 'meeting place' and others will have *No Access*.

Activity

Being celibate does not mean you cannot enjoy the company of the opposite sex; however, you need to have a plan. In this activity, use wisdom to plan a safe date and refer to your plan *prior* to going on any date. For example, here is my plan:

1. Dinner at a public place. We each drive our separate cars to manage any time where we have to be alone.

What's your plan?

2. Enjoy conversation using the 80/20 rule—I do 80% of the listening of 20% of the talking. Try to find out as much as possible about the other person.

What's your plan?

3. We say goodnight at the restaurant with a promise to call upon safe arrival to our destinations.

What's your plan?

Belief

Psalms 90:12: Teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

Confession

Heavenly Father,

Your Word promises to teach me how to live—how to act in every situation. Teach me how to date and enjoy being single.

Day 5: Distinguish Right from Wrong

It is not God's best that hindsight is our greatest teacher—not for those of us who believe The Word of God. The Word is our instruction manual, and we also have the greatest teacher living within us (i.e., The Holy Spirit).

So why do we make so many mistakes? Because we are wise in our own eyes, and we no longer seek God for that which we feel we already know. Since there is nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9), the Word must have the right answer for everything situation. Now for those of you who would argue that The Word doesn't address a specific subject, I would challenge you to read the book of Proverbs, for it teaches us how to act in every circumstance (Proverbs 1:2).

Most of our questions (or things we don't think the bible addresses) are questions related to character—or lack thereof. God has not left us helpless or hopeless, but His thoughts and ways are higher than ours, so we must raise our thinking and behaviors to pattern our Father. Sounds too simple? Only if you are trying to relate to God as an adult. Be like a child with God. Children trust their parents and rely upon them. Do you trust God? Are you relying upon him to help you make the right decision every time?

Activity

In this activity, I would like for you to begin to rely upon God to lead, guide and direct your path. Think of a major decision you must make soon. Whether it is a personal or professional decision, list something that is important to you.

Decision to be made: _____

What does the Word of God say about the above decision? List the scripture references here:

God is faithful. Now prove your faithfulness. For the next 15 days, declare (i.e., speak) the scriptures you have listed.

Belief

Proverbs 2:9, He shows how to distinguish right from wrong, how to find the right decision every time

Confession

Heavenly Father,

I repent for being wise in my own eyes because I need Your Wisdom. I need you to be with me today as I <name what you need help with>. I can't do this without you God, and if you are not with me I'll make mistakes. I need you in everything I say and do.

*Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven—
Matthew 18:3*

Day 6: Put God First

I remember the days when I never seemed to have enough time to spend with God. Sure, I managed to pray or listen to teaching tapes as I was driving in to work, and read a little at some point during the day, but I knew it was not enough and I yearned for more. Today, I no longer manage to fit God into my day—He starts my day. How did I make the switch? I sacrificed sleep by getting up an hour earlier than I needed to get ready for work. Yeah, it was hard at first, but it was important to me. And I learned something about myself—if it was important to me, I made it a priority. I suspect the same is true for you.

Now I know some of you are not “morning people” so you’re yawning at just the thought. Here is the truth: You’ll never have enough time for everything—so figure out what is most important to you and make it a priority.

Waiting to spend time with God when you’re “in your zone” is *not* recommended. By nightfall you’ve done and said a lot of things without the Wisdom of God, and we both know that by the end of your day, you’re not giving God your best—if anything at all. We must make Him a priority. If something has to fall through the cracks, do you really want that to be your time with God?

If you had an early morning meeting, would you set your clock and get up earlier? Isn’t your relationship with God more important than a meeting? If you had an early morning doctor’s appointment, you would adjust to allow time for the appointment. Ensuring God gets your best is best for you—regardless of the sacrifice you might have to make initially.

Activity

Let’s plan the start of your tomorrow.

How much time would you like to start spending with God each day? Be realistic and do all things in moderation. Fill in the blanks.

I would like to spend ____ minutes with God each day. To accomplish this, I need to get up by: _____ a.m.; therefore, I commit to set my clock to _____ a.m. in order to accomplish my goal.

Belief

Proverbs 3:6 In everything you do, put God first, and he will direct you and crown your efforts with success.

Confession

Heavenly Father,

I need your help with time management. And while I can't see how to accomplish all the things I need to do, I commit to giving you the first part of each day, and I trust you to give me the wisdom to know how to achieve the rest. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

Day 7: Guard Your Affections

What are affections? The Encarta Dictionary says, “Feelings of fondness or tenderness, sometimes as *opposed to reason.*”

Feelings of fondness or tenderness seem innocent enough; however, unless you are able to keep your affections from progressing beyond this phase, you are entering a danger zone. I’m fond of chocolate chip cookies, but I can stop myself after a few. Can you be fond of X of stop yourself from going further? When you hear people say, “*I can’t help myself; I just love him/her*”, they have allowed their affections to have too many chocolate chip cookies.

What stood out to me with the above definition was, “as opposed to reason” because affections and reasoning can play tug-of-war with each other. I think, I feel...I feel, I think, back and forth you will go in an endless circle. When you allow your affections to escalate from the fondness stage, you lessen your ability to reason. The good news is that your affections can be managed by your thought life (i.e., your reasoning).

Activity

Fill in the blanks to complete the below activity.

Emotional

I can’t help myself; I just love _____.

I feel so good when I’m with _____.

I feel I can really help _____.

I need to talk to _____ daily.



Now, let’s replace the above emotional statements with rational reasoning.

Rational Reasoning

I am fond of him/her, but I realize this is as far as I will allow my affections to go.

I enjoy spending time with _____; but I also enjoy <an activity> as well.

I care about X, but I am not his/her problem solver.

I enjoy talking to X, but I don’t need to talk to him/her every day. I need time to minister to myself.

If you don’t manage your thought life, your thought life will manage you. Exchange emotional statements with rational reasoning and your actions will eventually follow.

Belief

Proverbs 4:23--Above all else, guard your affections. For they influence everything else in your life.

Confession

Heavenly Father,

Forgive me for those times when I've allowed my emotions to dictate my decisions and actions. From this day forward, I will trust and rely upon you for stability and balance as I manage my emotions. In Jesus Name I pray, Amen.

Day 8: Value Your Life

Ever notice how costume jewelry is displayed where everyone can touch and handle it, but expensive jewelry is under lock and key? The distinction between the two has to do with their value. How valuable are you? While I love looking at things encased within glass, I am very aware of the message--to be handled with care. You too are valuable and *never* on sale.

My wake-up call came the day I had to request an HIV test. How did a married, faithful woman end up needing such a test? My pastor/husband was arrested for soliciting a prostitute. Anger outweighed embarrassment for me—I was livid. I sat in the doctor’s office and recalled how, when I was a sinner, I didn’t even have to be tested for an STD. Why did I have to get married and go through this nonsense? I vowed that this would be the first and last time I had to go through this process. Thanks to a celibate life (and getting rid of the husband), I’ve kept that commitment.

The seriousness of this disease is very personal to me. I lost a young, female cousin to AIDS in 1995. She had been dating this fellow, who knew he was infected, for a couple of years before she found out his status. To make matters worse, he didn’t bother to tell her—that news came from his mother shortly after they couple split. With grave concern in her eyes, his mom asked if they had unprotected sex. Although they used protection when they met, they stopped shortly after, as the relationship progressed.

The man outlived my cousin by two years—because he was taking his medication.

Activity

Check the statements below that you believe to be true.

- Drug users and homosexuals are the carriers of HIV.
- Oral sex is safe sex.
- As long as my partner isn’t gay, lesbian or bi-sexual, I don’t have to be concerned about HIV.
- I don’t worry about HIV because I always use protection.
- I’m in a committed relationship, so I don’t worry about HIV/STDs.

“*HIV is primarily found in the blood, semen, or vaginal fluid of an infected person”. HIV is transmitted in 3 main ways:

- Having sex (anal, vaginal, or oral) with someone infected with HIV
- Sharing needles and syringes with someone infected with HIV □
- Being exposed to HIV before or during birth or through breast feeding

*Accessed on 3/13/09 from the Center of Disease Control and Prevention:

Hopefully, you did not check any of the previous statements as truths.

Belief

Prov 5:7-11 (NLT)

So now, my sons listen to me. Never stray from what I am about to say: Stay away from her! Don't go near the door of her house! If you do, you will lose your honor and will lose to merciless people all you have achieved. Strangers will consume your wealth, and someone else will enjoy the fruit of your labor. In the end you will groan in anguish when disease consumes your body.

Confession

Heavenly Father,

Teach me how to value myself as you value me. I realize that I treat myself poorly and allow others to treat me poorly because I don't value myself. I desire to speak of myself and think of myself just as you speak and think about me. In Jesus Name I pray, Amen.

Day 9: Your Lips Help Control Your Hips

Words are containers of both good and bad things; they create—life or death. This world we live in was spoken into existence, God said, “Let There Be” and there was. Jesus used God’s Words and he always spoke life.

James 3:10--Blessing and cursing stream from the same lips! My brothers, this ought not to be.

To continually speak life might take a lifetime of training for some of us, but we must start today. I had a really bad habit of calling myself stupid, even when I made the simplest of mistakes, like dropping something or turning left when I meant to turn right....didn’t matter what I did wrong, I would call myself stupid. Now, people look at me strange when I drop things because I say, “you are so smart”. Observers look in bewilderment because my actions look totally opposite to what I say.

To stop fornicating, I began to say about myself what The Word says about me:

- I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. (2 Cor 5:21)
- Because God is Holy and I’m made in His image, I am Holy. (1 Peter 1:16)
- For this is the will of God, even my sanctification, that I abstain from fornication; 4 that I know how to possess my own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in the passion of lust (1 Thess 4:3-5 (ASV))
- I’ve been created for God’s good pleasure (Rev 4:11)

Activity

What are you saying about you that contribute to your behavior? List your negative self-talk in the ‘Curse Talk’ column and write a positive affirmation in the right column.

Curse Talk

Bless Talk



Belief

Proverbs 6:2--I am snared with the words of my lips, I am caught by the speech of my mouth.

Confession

Heavenly Father,

Forgive me for speaking negatively against myself. Since you created me, I am what you say I am, and I will speak what you have spoken about me. In Jesus Name I pray, Amen.

Day 10: Don't Change with the Times

Being in this world and not being of this world is a delicate balancing act; yet it need not be. If Christ is the same yesterday, today and forevermore (Hebrews 13:8) why should we change? I realize that some feel as if the bible was written for people who lived in a different time; however, it might surprise you that much of what is happening today is not new.

Eccl 1:9 (KJV)

The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.

The decision to uphold the Word of God is a costly one, but the rewards are priceless. In our modern society we might begin to feel as if something is wrong if things remain the same. Change is good—if it's a good change. However, some changes are not good, and we must use the Word of God as our measuring tool to determine if we need to “keep up with our times”.

Activity

In this activity, let's compare our ways and determine if they might be different than God's ways. Check the items below that are true for you:

- I love the Lord, and I attend church regularly.
- I'm a good person; I don't rob, steal or kill.
- It's OK to have sex with _____. How else would I know if we're compatible?
- We're just living together for a short time before we get married.
- I want to have fun before I get old.

Below are TRUTHS that are in contrast to the above:

- He who loves me will keep my commandments. John 14:15
- None is righteous--no not one. Romans 3:10
- Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. 1 Cor 6:19
- Abstain from all appearances of evil. 1 Thes 5:22
- Tomorrow is not promised to you.

Challenge yourself to find scriptures that instruct you on what the Word of God says about your behavior.



Belief

Proverbs 8:32 Now therefore listen to me, O you sons; for blessed are those who *keep* my ways.

Confession

Heavenly Father,

Lord raise my ways and thoughts to your ways and thoughts. In Jesus Name I pray, Amen.

Day 11: Guard your Gates

Think about a gate for a moment. Gates can be useful for restricting access. A secured gate might require a code for access or perhaps there is someone who guards the gate. Unless the gate has been left open or unlocked, you will need to perform some action in order to gain access. Regardless of the type of gate, they can all be opened or closed.

Our physical bodies have gates too. Our eyes and ears are two important gates that we must guard by restricting access. God used a powerful example to teach me how important it is for me to guard what I watch and what I listen to. I am extremely careful about what I allow my daughter to watch on television, and I would watch “my movies” when she went to bed or was at her dad’s. During one of the movies, the Holy Spirit asked, “why do you watch certain movies when D is not around?” I answered, “because I don’t want her to see or hear certain things.” The next statement stunned me. “And how do you think I feel about you?” WOW!

This was so astounding to me because I had never been valued by anyone, and the Creator of the Universe told me that He cared about me and wanted to protect me from inappropriate content. I had never even considered that God was concerned about what I allowed into my gates. Now, I had done the ‘religious thing’ by purchasing Curse-Free TV, which filters profanity from movies; however, I still saw the images and could read their lips. God was requiring another level of holiness, and knowing how passionately I felt about protecting my daughter, I knew He was even more passionate about protecting me.

Now, I’m a movie buff so I thought limiting myself to G/PG rated movies would be impossible, but as with everything else, once I decided to not allow myself to watch any other movies, my desire for other movies disappeared.

Activity

What are some of things you can do to guard your eyes and ears? List them in the space provided below.

Belief

Matt 5:30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee.

This does not mean to literally cut your hand off but it does direct us to take drastic measures in order to not offend God.

Confession

Heavenly Father,

I have so many years of looking and listening to the wrong things. Help me to make right choices so that I can guard my gates. In Jesus Name I pray, Amen.

Day 12: Desire a Celibate Life

Ever notice that if you eat the wrong foods for a few days that you develop an appetite for those same kinds of food. Desires work the same way; the habits you repeatedly practice increase your desires. The good news is that since this works in the negative, it will also work in the positive. As we repeatedly give ourselves to what is good for us, our desires will be for good.

Bottled water has become a staple for many of us; growing up, I rarely drank water. However, as a young adult, water became my beverage of choice. How did this happen? After a couple of episodes with dehydration, I forced myself to start drinking water. I didn't like it because I found it tasteless. However, within weeks, I found myself *needing* water shortly after waking. Now, I have water bottles everywhere; in the car, on my desk, next to the bed. My desire is for water; it has become my beverage of choice.

The same can happen with any negative (or ungodly) character. If we start by doing things as God has instructed us, our desires will increase for godly character.

Activity

In this activity, let's plan to increase your desires for celibacy by:

- Begin attending church services or increase my attendance.
- Read at least one article on celibacy.
- Identify a celibate person in your life. If you don't personally know the individual, try to get to know them by:
 - Signing up for their newsletter
 - Following their writings
 - Joining their social network

Success isn't accidental, it's intentional. You need to plan to be successful—on purpose and by implementing the above, you will establish a good foundation for building your celibate life.

Belief

Proverbs 11: 14 Where no wise guidance is the people fall, but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.

Confession

Heavenly Father,

I do desire a celibate life so I ask that you will allow me to meet people who are successful with celibacy.
In Jesus Name I pray, Amen.

Day 13: Study the Word of God

Today is the foundation of living successfully at anything—not just celibacy. The Word of God has to be held in the highest regard of all we say and do. Unfortunately, we invest the smallest amount of time in this area where we will see the greatest results. Like with anything else, as you give yourself continually to something, you develop an appetite for it. And there is no better smorgasbord than the Word of God.

You have more work today than any other day, so let's move directly to the activity.

Activity

I'd like for you to research the following. You may use any resource available.

Does the word celibate appear in scripture? If so, where?

How would you define fornication?

Define sanctification.

What will be your biggest challenge in living a celibate life?

How do you plan to prepare for this challenge?

Belief

Proverbs 12: 1--Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish.

Confession

Heavenly Father,

As I study your Word, I ask that you will reveal yourself to me so that I understand you better and our relationship deepens. In Jesus Name I pray, Amen.

Hint: Answers for the activity can be found in the appendix.

Day 14: Set Healthy Boundaries

Setting healthy boundaries was a challenging area for me because I lived so much of my life with unhealthy boundaries. To alleviate disruption, I preferred to allow people to say or do whatever they wanted because confrontation was too difficult. Dysfunction was so commonplace for me that when I met people who had healthy boundaries, I thought they were rather cold and unyielding.

As I began to heal, I learned that healthy boundaries are pliable enough to determine who to let in and who to keep out. Using boundaries wisely allows you to teach people how to treat you, and enables you to identify those relationships that are healthy and those that are dysfunctional.

Before I share criteria for evaluating boundaries, read the following exchange that occurred via text message after an initial meeting with a colleague. I'll call him J.

J: You have a very nice voice.

Me: Thanks—now I just need something to say 😊

J: Hmm---looking for an audience? I could listen to you all day.

Me: Thanks again—but without having something significant to say, your day would be wasted.

J: Let me hear more, and I'll be the judge as to what is a waste of my time.

Me: (It now occurs to me that this is not an appropriate conversation between colleagues). J, you're very charming, but I've gotta run. TTYL

From the above exchange, do you think good boundaries were being set for an initial conversation between co-workers?

Let's use the below activity to examine boundaries by checking Yes or No to the questions.

Activity

When determining your boundaries do you decide:	Yes	No
Is this a healthy conversation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is this relationship healthy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does this person support my brand?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will my support of <person, event> affect my brand?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is this behavior in line with my brand?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How will being a part of certain groups enable my brand?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Belief

Even God sets boundaries. Job 23:10 (NLT)

He created the horizon when he separated the waters; he set the boundary between day and night.

Confession

Heavenly Father,

Help me to set good boundaries that will enable me to do your will, and not the will of men. In Jesus Name I pray, Amen.

Day 15: Abstain from Evil Appearances

For those of us who have good, platonic relationships with the opposite sex, today could be challenging. While we don't want to concern ourselves with anyone's opinion, we also don't want to lead observers astray by our perceived actions. I'll share a true story with you to further explain.

It's 10:00 p.m. and you're just coming home from a long day at the office that concluded with a late dinner with colleagues. As you pull into your driveway, you notice that my front door opens and a man emerges to leave. You don't give this much thought and close your garage door. The next day, you again arrive home late and the same man is again leaving my home. This time you think, "Hmmm...maybe she was going through a dry spell and has started dating."

No, in fact, the man leaving my home is my daughter's father. He has been working 10 hour days for the past 7 days and has not spent any time with his daughter. So, I allow him to come over after work to visit his daughter, and you happen to arrive home as he is leaving. True account, but this doesn't change how the late night departures appear.

What if you were looking for a church home and you had watched me enough to know that I attended church. Not knowing the true account, would your perception of me change? For some people it would not, but for others it might. Bottom line, my appearance of a "perceived evil" could negatively affect some people.

Activity

Can you think of any of your behaviors that others might perceive as evil? If so, list them.

What, if anything, can you change about the above behavior to remove the evil perception?

Belief

1 Thes 5:22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

Confession

Heavenly Father,

Although I'm not always aware of my behavior, allow the Holy Spirit to alert me when my behavior could cause someone to stumble. I desire for others to see your Godly behavior in me. In Jesus Name I pray, Amen.

Day 16: Make No Occasions for Sin

Going on dates with the opposite sex is fine. The lack of a plan for after the date is where most of us fail. Like diets, if you exclude certain foods from your menu, your desire for those food increases. Then, when you incorporate those foods back into your menu, you might over consume them. Similarly, for those of you who exclude the opposite sex from your company, you might be setting yourself up for a major fall. It is important to have balance in everything.

Phil 4:5, Let your moderation be known unto all men...The Lord is at hand.

Remember the story I shared with you at the beginning of this guide? My near deadly “desk encounter” now that was an occasion for sin. I knew what I was thinking prior to his asking if he should close the door, so why allow the occasion for sin? We all have many instances of these types of occasions for sin; however, we can decide to NOT cross the line. In fact, let’s not even come close to the line; middle of the road is a good location.

While we all have “close encounters”, they will occur less often if we are aware of our danger zones.

Here are some “danger zones” for me that I have to continually monitor.

1. Coaching, advising or counseling the opposite sex alone.
2. Lunch/dinner outings with male co-workers.
3. Establishing relationships with men that excludes his wife or significant others.
4. Being deceived that long-term male friendships will not progress any further.

You can end up in situations that you didn’t foresee.

Activity

What are some danger zones for you?

Review your dating plan for Day 4. Now, list those areas that you should continually monitor.

Belief

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Confession

Heavenly Father,

As I become honest with myself and you I will not, by manipulation or deceit, put myself into compromising situations that might cause me to sin. In Jesus Name I pray, Amen.

Day 17: Watch your Wardrobe

Let me start today by stating directly that we, as individuals, are responsible for our actions, so I'm not suggesting that anyone deserves to be disrespected or violated as a result of their apparel. However, I am stating, quite emphatically, that some people believe that we are willing to share what we are willing to show. It's not right....it's just a fact.

This goes back to your brand (Day 2). How do you define yourself and how do you want to be perceived? Most of us consciously decide to attract the attention; I know I did for many years. However, the more confident you become in who you really are, the less negative attention you will need from others. What's negative about someone gawking over you, you ask? Maybe your life. I'll share an example.

I had been cleaning for several hours before remembering something I needed from the store. Hating to break my cleaning streak, but knowing that I needed to go out before nightfall, I hurriedly threw on a pair of jeans and went to the store. I didn't think about my appearance because this was really to be a quick run then back to finish cleaning.

While at the store looking on the shelf for the item, I heard a male voice speaking LOUDLY. Since no other voices were heard, I assumed he was on a cell phone. As he got closer to my aisle, his voice got even LOUDER. As he passed the aisle I was in, he did a quick double take and came down the aisle. At the same time, another male (let's call him second guy) came down the aisle from the opposite direction. The male on the phone was giving me "the eye" while trying to quickly end his call. I hadn't found what I was looking for, but I didn't want to be bothered, so I quickly left the store and went across the street to another store. I was looking for the same item in the new store, when I noticed "second guy" was at the new store, same aisle. Now maybe that was just coincidence, but my "alert buttons" were activated. I left the store, and drove a different route home to make sure I wasn't being followed.

I asked, *Lord was that man following me?* The Holy Spirit gently spoke and said look how you are dressed. I glanced down at my jeans and understood. The painted on jeans drew the wrong attention, because I was not willing to share what I was showing. I came home and threw the jeans into the garbage.

Activity

Take an inventory of your closet. Are there any clothes that go against your brand? If so, today would be a good day to clean your closets.

Belief

Proverbs 31:25 Strength and honour *are* her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

Confession

Heavenly Father,

I know as I change from the inside, the outside will eventually conform so allow me to clothe myself with holiness. In Jesus Name I pray, Amen.

Day 18: Do Not Be Deceived

The mind is a fascinating organ that enables us to come up with wonderful solutions. However, that same organ can house the greatest forms of deceptions. One area I was deceived with was my justifying that “fornicating was OK because we were getting married anyway”. But this was still sex outside of marriage and any self-talk contrary to God’s Word exalts your thought process over the Word of God.

Deception is very dangerous because not only are we deceived but we also, through rationalization, make ourselves believe that what we are thinking and doing is correct. Besides, you have to conduct a “taste test” prior to purchasing right? WRONG. Romans 8:28 proclaims, *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

It was this same kind of thinking that deceived Eve. The enemy caused her to think beyond God’s words. And, like Eve, we are still deceiving ourselves with our stinking thinking (i.e., thinking contrary to God’s word). All deceptions are lies. And any lies we tell ourselves and others originates from the Father of Lies (John 8:44).

Exalting the Word of God above our thoughts enables us to speak the truth and not be deceptive. As long as we rationalize our thoughts and behaviors we will continue to struggle with deception because we must justify our actions in order to live with ourselves.

Another area that I’ve watched some of us be deceived in is what I termed forced celibacy. Don’t be deceived in this area; there are some of us who are forced into celibacy because we have no willing partners. You are not leading a celibate life until there is an opportunity to submit to the temptation, but instead you resist and submit to God.

Activity

Here are some other areas where we deceive ourselves. Check any that are your beliefs:

- Oral sex is not sex
- Masturbation is one way to take care of myself and not fornicate
- Intimacy with the same gender is not fornicating
- As long as there is no intercourse, we are not having sex
- As long as I repent after each “slip”, I am OK.
- God created us with these needs so He expect us to have sex
- Men cannot live without sex



If you believe any of the above, please search scripture and list here for reference.

Belief

Romans 7:11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

Confession

Heavenly Father,

I know that the devil hates me but allow me to see any area where I am being deceived. In Jesus Name I pray, Amen.

Day 19: Intimacy is Mandatory

Intimacy being mandatory might read like a contradiction for this guide; however, you *must* have an intimate relationship. The distinction is determining *who* the intimate relationship is with. God desires an intimate relationship with us, and at the core of us, we desire the same with God. However, because our perspective of intimacy is so limited (and sometimes dysfunctional) it is difficult for us to go beyond anything physical.

An intimate relationship with God is not as difficult as it might seem. In fact, it begins like most of our relationships; by spending time with and getting to know one another. Spending time with God is just a decision to carve out a portion of each day to ignite your relationship. We already do this for anyone who is significant to us; yet when it comes to God, prioritizing Him becomes too much work. Most of us wonder why we go from one trial to the next, but I believe God allows these things to happen (not orchestrates but allows) in order to get face time with us. God is always available to us and waiting on us, but it seems as if we are always trying to “find time for God.”

The “getting to know one another” is solely on us. God has revealed himself to us through His Word, and while He knows everything about us, we have to get to the place of complete transparency with Him. For this reason, it is imperative that we read the Word of God. Think about it this way. Imagine there was someone you were interested in building a relationship with, but they lived in a far-away country. The person kept 66 diaries detailing his or her life, and he or she would not be allowed to return to your country until you read each and every diary. Most of us would forsake sleep and any spare moment we had reading those diaries. Well, the 66 books of the bible are the diaries God left for us. And He won't return to us until we read the books so that we better understand who He is, what He likes and dislikes. God has also detailed His love for us within the diaries, and we need to read these love letters to keep us comforted and encouraged in his long absence.

The bible is full of love letters from God so that you would know how He feels about YOU, what He thinks about YOU and what He has said about YOU.

Activity

Write a letter to God. Tell God what you think about your relationship with Him. The steps you will take to improve the relationship. Pour your heart out and let God know how you really feel.

Belief

John 14:21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him

Confession

Heavenly Father,

The only form of intimacy I know is physical, so I will need your help in understanding and accepting an intimate relationship with you. I deeply desire an intimate relationship with you and know that this is your desire too. I ask that you will show me how to accomplish this. In Jesus Name I pray, Amen.

Day 20: Prepare for the Cynics/Critics

Once you make a decision to be celibate, you may experience opposition like never before. The reasons for this are many, but one of the factors is because misery loves company. Many others would like to live a celibate lifestyle; however, they are not willing to pay the price, so they would prefer that you remain in bondage with them than be free. A wise man shared with me that people are more comfortable with your dysfunction than they are with you deliverance. However, I encourage you to remain faithful to the God who has been faithful to you; regardless to what the critics/cynics say.

I have experienced the gamut of comments from observers waiting to see when I will “slip up.” What they do not realize is that I’ve actually put into practice the wisdom that I’ve been sharing with you. The one thing my critics/cynics are correct about is that I didn’t have the ability to do this on my own. There is no good thing within my flesh either, but I purposed to make radical changes and take a firm stand to see the Word of God manifested in my life.

I had to change my primary care physician after he insisted that sexual activity was a necessity for my health and well-being. I don’t dignify comments about “you must be wearing a pillow out” (i.e., masturbation). I ignore the odd looks I get from men when they come onto me, and I don’t encourage the advance. Yes, some have come out and asked if I like men. I don’t answer—it is just another method to engage me in conversation. At the end of the day, I’ve got one Lord and Master to answer to, and His name is Jesus.

I believe my decisions have started the generational blessing in my family line. If the curses worked well for decades then surely the blessings will overtake my daughter and subsequent generations. If you have been following this guide and completing the activities, you too should now be more comfortable with your new lifestyle.

Activity

Spend some time today; writing some of the possible criticisms you might receive. Then list how you plan to handle the incidents.

Belief

Col 4:6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one.

Confession

Heavenly Father,

Help me to answer my critics/cynics with words and actions that are pleasing to you. In Jesus Name I pray, Amen.

Day 21: Enjoy being Single

On our final day, I want to help you change your view of being single. It is not being alone because He will never leave or forsake you (Psalms 27:10); it is being whole. The Wordnet by Princeton University defines wholeness as “an undivided or unbroken completeness or totality with nothing wanting”. Your singleness is completeness.

Singleness is a season for spiritual growth and being busy about the things of God. I don’t experience boredom or loneliness—there are too many untapped areas within me that are waiting to come forth. The scripture is correct, married people are concerned about the things concerning their spouse, but single people can be concerned with the things of God (1 Cor 7:34). In my singleness, I have experienced more growth spiritually, personally, physically, emotionally and financially than I did in 14 years of married life. Now, I am not opposed to being married, I am only opposed to sex outside of marriage.

Celibacy is an important first step for all of us who are currently unmarried; however, being celibate does not mean that you are whole. You must examine each and every area of your life to determine if there are any that are incomplete.

Activity

Examine the areas below and note any that are incomplete.

Spiritually

Physically

Emotionally

Financially

Belief

Hebrews 13:5

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Confession

Heavenly Father,

I desire to be whole. Please reveal to me any areas where I am not whole so that I can use your Word to heal. In Jesus Name I pray, Amen.

If you find you need additional help in these areas, I've also written a book entitled, B! Made Whole. You can find more information on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

It has been a pleasure being your AP over the past 20 days, and I'd love any feedback regarding your experiences while completing the manual or anything related to being celibate. Please leave a review, positive or constructive, on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). I am sincerely interested in all feedback as I desire to continue growing as well and be a blessing to the Body of Christ.

Blessing!

Appendix

Day 1: Were you able to develop an association with a celibate person? If no, why not?

Day 2: What is your brand?

Look at *Day 3: The Benefits of Living a Fornicating Life.*

If you're comfortable doing so, please email this to me so that I can learn what you consider benefits.

Email: cherithompson@johnmaxwellgroup.com

Day 4: Did you write down your dating plan? If so, please refer to it before going on any date. If not, remember, he who doesn't plan is planning to fail.

Results of *Day 5 Activity: Allowing God to Direct my Decisions*

You were asked to list scriptures regarding the decision and confess the scriptures for 15 days. What were the results of this activity? If the answer has not already manifested, do not be discouraged? Ask God to search you and reveal anything in you that He wants to change. Continue to believe God for the answer until it is revealed to you.

Record your results in the lines below.

Day 6: Are you keeping your commitment with spending time with God? If not, why not?

Day 7: Are you managing your emotions or are they still managing you? If the later, what do you plan to do to start managing your emotions?

Day 8: Did you check any statements to be true? If so, you should educate yourself on HIV/AIDS. You might want to start at the Center for Disease Control.

Day 9: Has your curse talk diminished or disappeared? If not, why not?

Day 10: Over the past 21 days do you find your ways agreeing more with God's ways? If not, why not?

Day 11: Are you guarding your gates? If not, why not?

Day 12: What have you done to increase your desire for celibacy? If nothing why not stop now and locate a resource, it will not take much time to look into this.

Answers to *Day 13* Activity:

Does the word celibate appear in scripture? Yes, twice.

Matt 19:12—For example, some men are celibate because they were born that way. Others are celibate because they were castrated. Still others have decided to be celibate because of the kingdom of heaven. If anyone can do what you've suggested, then he should do it. (God's Word)

1 Cor 7:1—Now regarding the questions you asked in your letter. Yes, it is good to live a celibate life.

How would you define fornication? The King James Dictionary defines it as **sexual immorality**.

Define sanctification. The King James Dictionary defines it as **the act of making a thing pure and holy**.

Day 14: Did you identify any boundaries that you needed to put in place? Did you establish those boundaries?

Day 15: Did you have any behaviors that had the appearance of evil? Did you change these behaviors? If not, why?

Day 16: Did you list those challenge areas that you will have to continually monitor. If not, ask someone you trust if there are areas that you should monitor.

Day 17: Was it necessary to discard some of your clothing? If not, why someone you trust if any of your clothing might be inappropriate.

Day 18: Were there any areas you were deceived in? If not, ask someone close to you if they feel you are deceived in any area?

Day 19: Plan to write a letter once a month to God. It will be good to read your love letter the following month.

Day 20: Did you check any statements to be true? If so, you should educate yourself on HIV/AIDS.

Day 21 Activity:

Has the Lord led you to someone who is celibate? If not, join our online community at N2MEC.org.

About the Author

Cheri Thompson is a dedicated mother, author, motivational speaker, certified coach with John Maxwell and CEO of eTrainers.org, an eLearning company that specializes in customized training solutions. Additionally, she has founded N2MEC.org; a non-profit organization whose mission is to coach men and women through the challenges of life. Cheri earned a BBA Degree from DePaul University and holds credentials from the American Association of Christian Counseling (AACC). She resides in Illinois and enjoys learning, writing and traveling.