

Practical Things You Can Do to Start Living Chastity Now

1. PRAY!!

Mother Teresa said **“Purity is the fruit of prayer.”** Chastity cannot be lived by one’s own strength, but requires the help of Christ and the graces He gives through the Sacraments. Pick a saint—St. Joseph, St. Anne, St. Maria Goretti, St. Philomena, and Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati are some suggestions—and ask them to pray for you specifically in the area of purity. **Pray for strength to always do what’s right, for your future vocation and spouse, and for all people** to know the joy that comes from living a chaste life for the Lord.



2. Start loving now.

Chastity isn’t about waiting to love; it’s about authentically loving NOW. Find ways to renounce your will and sacrifice for the good of others. Act in such a way that all you do reflects your own dignity and helps others to realize their true worth as well. **Learn to give of yourself and receive the gift of others.**

3. Be yourself

Never change who you are or water down your beliefs and moral convictions in hopes that others will like you more. **You will be respected for your authenticity,** and people will know where you stand by the example of your life. Find friends who will encourage you in living a chaste life rather than pressuring you to conform to the world’s standards.

4. Practice self-discipline.

Challenge yourself in the little things: not hitting the snooze button, skipping dessert, avoiding gossip, etc. By renouncing yourself in the little things, **you are training yourself to renounce yourself in the big things.** Then, when temptation comes your way, you’ll be ready. Be faithful to your commitments; set goals and stick with them.

5. Control your thoughts and imagination.

Once you go to a place mentally, it is easier to go there in reality. Some of what we hear and watch in the media sabotages our longings for real love by training us to use people. If you have romance novels, pornography, explicit songs, or anything else that tempts you, **trash them.** It might be hard, but you will experience the freedom that comes from rejecting sin and addiction, and **Satan will no longer have these tools to use against you.**

6. Think about how you advertise yourself

The things you do and say, your friends, the way you dress, etc., all tell the world something about you. **Dress in a way that accents your beauty** rather than just your body. Modesty is about respecting yourself and helping your brothers and sisters in Christ to live chastity as well. Archbishop Fulton Sheen said, “No one ever becomes truly beautiful until he stops trying to make himself beautiful, and begins making himself good. **Mary was not ‘full of grace’ because she**



was beautiful; she was beautiful because she was full of grace.”

7. Be alert!

Don’t drink alcohol or do drugs. Be **aware** of your surroundings (watch your drink!), and keep full possession of the capacity to think clearly, which is so compromised by drugs and alcohol.

8. Know yourself

It’s not just about saying NO when you’re in a bad situation, but about **avoiding these situations to begin with.** If certain situations, things, or people are a source of temptation to you, **have the wisdom and strength to stay away.** If you are ever in a situation where you may be tempted beyond your strength, 1) speak up, 2) stand up, and 3) walk out.

9. Have a reminder

Wear a chastity ring/necklace or say a certain special prayer daily. **Do something that reminds you of your commitment to true love.**

10. Group date.

Go out with a guy/girl in a group of people. It will be more fun, and you will get to see how this person interacts with your friends. Be up-front and honest so he or she knows that chastity is essential in your relationship. If your date doesn’t respect your choice to live chastely, what else won’t they respect?

CHASTITY:



What are you saying

YES to?

by Nicole Murlenkamp

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Chastity is a virtue that each baptized person is called to live no matter what his or her vocation. **Chastity is more about what you are doing than about what you aren't doing.** It is **SO MUCH MORE** than merely abstaining from sex and remaining a "technical virgin." Chastity is actually at the heart of a good marriage. So if chastity is lived even after marriage, then it has to be **more than just saying NO to sex.**

Chastity defined:

Chastity is a virtue that directs all our sexual desires, emotions, and attractions toward the dignity of the person and the real meaning of love.¹

That means that all of our sexual desires, emotions, and attractions to others are supposed to be at the service of the **dignity of the other person and the real meaning of love**—not at the service of what we want! Chastity is a deep respect and admiration for the person AND for the gifts of our sexuality and sex. As John Paul II puts it, **chastity is the readiness to affirm and love the person in every situation.** You know what you are saying no to by living chastity, but what are you saying YES to?



¹ *Theology of the Body for Teens Student Workbook*, Ascension Press, p. 42
² Jason Evert, *If You Really Loved Me*, Catholic Answers, p. 26
³ www.heritage.org/Research/Abstinence/cda0304.cfm
⁴ www.heritage.org/Research/Abstinence/abstinence_charts.cfm
⁵ www.omsoul.com/who-pill-bc.php
⁶ www.mayoclinicproceedings.com/pdf/8110/8110a1.pdf

Chastity is first and foremost a great yes to the true meaning of sex, to the goodness of being created as male and female in the image of God. Chastity isn't repressive. It's totally liberating. It frees us from the tendency to use others for selfish gratification and enables us to love others as Christ loves us.
—Christopher West

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING YES TO?

1. Chastity is saying YES to AUTHENTIC real love.

Sex does not equal love, and love does not equal sex. Love is not just a happy feeling or something that comes and goes. **Love is a deep desire to do what is good for another. It involves sacrifice.** Think of the love Christ has for you—a love that led Him to lay down His life on the cross. When compared to this kind of love, do you really want to date or marry somebody who rests his or her entire idea of a good relationship on mere feelings?

2. Chastity is saying YES to you.

Chastity says, **"I believe that I am worth waiting for. I am a unique unrepeatable person who has a unique unrepeatable gift to offer."** By living chastity, you are saying YES to your own dignity and honoring the person God made you to be.



3. Chastity is saying YES to the person.

To every person you meet—especially those of the opposite sex—chastity says, "I will not put you in a position where I may use or hurt you. I will respect who you are, including your body. I will govern my eyes and thoughts so that they honor you." Since sex is "saying your wedding vows with your body instead of your voice,"² **a commitment to chastity is a promise to never tell a lie with your body.**

4. Chastity is saying YES to the "it is very good" kind of sex.

The Catholic Church says sex is SO great and SO good that when you take it out of marriage you cheapen it. You reduce it, and it's no longer something great. God told Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply; then He looked at His creation and said **"It is very good."**

Adam and Eve were the first married couple. The "it is very good" kind of sex happens within marriage, where there is a life-long commitment and a total giving and receiving of each other.

Having "meaningless" sex with different people now—even even if you love them—is going to make it difficult once you're married to express your TOTAL and UNCONDITIONAL love through this same act that once meant something less to you. **The question is: What do you want?**

5. Chastity is saying YES to your future spouse.

Whether you are called to marriage, the priesthood, or religious life, by living chastity, you are preparing yourself for your future vocation by loving even when it's not easy or doesn't feel good. You are being faithful to your spouse (whether a man or woman, the Church, or Christ Himself) now. Can you imagine a more powerful and beautiful gift to present to God and your spouse on your wedding day? How awesome it would be to look him or her in the eyes and say, **"I have prepared myself for you!"** There is no way you will regret giving this gift to God and your future spouse! If you have made mistakes in the past, **go to confession and open yourself to the HEALING power of God and His MERCY,** and begin living chastity from this very moment.



6. Chastity is saying YES to a great future.

Popular opinion would have you believe that your life will be perfect after you begin having sex, but the stats show just the opposite. Chaste teens avoid unintended pregnancy and STDs (many of which are incurable and cause infertility). They are also

less likely to be depressed and commit suicide,³ have a marriage that ends in divorce, experience poverty, have an abortion,⁴ and use contraception. Oral contraceptives (estrogen and progestin combination) lead to an increased risk of several kinds of cancer.⁵ A woman's risk for

breast cancer increases by 44% when the Pill is taken prior to her first pregnancy.⁶ **Don't mess with your future and the happiness the Lord longs for you to enjoy!**

7. Chastity is saying YES to God.

God is the Author of romance. He intended it from the beginning. **God's plans are not shallow and mediocre. They are GREAT!** He has set the bar high because He wants what is truly best for us and knows the deepest

desires of our hearts. Chastity says YES to the fullness of God's plans for you. **Give your life to Christ and live daily for Him; you will have more adventure than you know what to do with!**

