



# #BVMIE

BEING A VIRGIN ISN'T ENOUGH

CHADIA MATHURIN

**BEING A VIRGIN ISN'T ENOUGH**

**By Chadia Mathurin**

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# #dedication

*To Princess Yana Terris:*

*You worked tirelessly to encourage young women that purity was the way to go, and I hope that this body of work somehow adds to what you started while you were here. Even in your death you impacted my life. Somehow, the hope of not disappointing you and getting your autographed copy to you as promised, gave me the strength to finish writing this book. I Love you, girl!*

*To my amazing grandmother, Doris Laurent:*

*First, I ensure that it's God's will and then I hope that it makes you proud. A very large part of what drives this woman is the desire to make you proud. I love you, Mam!*

*To Dominic and Chad:*

*May you both make the decision to be the men of valor, honor and LOVE that I so often catch glimpses of. May you change your generation, with God at the helm. I love you both so much. \*Kisses\**

*To my readers from Kenya, the Caribbean and across the world:*

*This book is yours, and so I dedicate it to you. Thank you for reading the blog and thank you for sending me messages to find out when the next post would come. Sometimes, I really didn't feel like writing, but I so often wrote because I didn't want to disappoint you all. I am genuine and sincere when I say, that I love you all.*

## #acknowledgements

My name may be on the cover of this book, but at the end of the day this work is really a product of so many years of deposits in my life by so many different people. I wish not to forget anyone, so I say thank you to everyone who has ever impacted my life in one way or another. Still, it would be remiss if I didn't single out a few persons.

To Dominic and Marcia Mathurin, the Lord used you to bring this vessel to earth and I am grateful that you answered the call.

To Mummy, I say thank you for bringing me up in the ways of the Lord. It wasn't always easy, because while you didn't raise me alone, bringing me up in the ways of the Lord was largely your doing. As I get older and I begin to observe the ways of this world, I understand that you gave me a gift by bringing me into the house of the Lord. Even today, if I decide to miss a day of church for whatever reason, you continue to remind me that God must take precedence; absolutely annoying sometimes but I am blessed because of it. I Love You!

To Papa, you're not saved, and sometimes this saddens me. However, I see in you a man who honors his responsibility as a husband and a father. Our countless debates about the Bible, Christianity and church in general have brought me into a deeper dissection of the Word. You were my first lesson in apologetics. You've always challenged me and even though you sometimes have no clue or understanding of what God is doing in my life (sometimes I don't either), you support me with your finances and patience. I am grateful, and until you give another permission to take your spot, you will be my #1 guy. You probably always will be. I love you, Papa!

To Bishop Thomas Eristhee, I am in large part the woman that I am today because of your teachings on holiness. They weren't always popular. But be assured that they impacted a life; they impacted this life. This book is in essence an extension of the good work that you started. You had it right! Holiness is essential to the quality of our communion with God. It is a state that every Christian should aspire to.

Ayodele Stuart, you have been a treasure in my life. I tell you everything without fear or judgment, and you always guide me in love. I've shared with you my insecurities; I've shared with you things that I've shared with no one else. You've shared with me the burden of my confusion in my decision making process and in my wrestling with taking the steps that God has ordered for me, you've seen me cry, you know which boys I like and which ones have hurt me. As far as human beings go, you are

one of those who know me best and I couldn't dream of being accountable to any other human being than you. I love ya, Dele!

Sister Faith, I can sincerely say that you are the cream of the crop of youth leaders. You saw in us what we didn't see in ourselves and because of that you held us to standards that I do not yet see Pastors hold their mature members to. I am eternally grateful for your contribution to my life. I took with me a lifelong lesson: you can find the answer to everything in the Word of God. Words cannot express how powerful that lesson is.

Rev (Reverend Ian Cummings) and Miss Lana, thank you for opening your home to me.

To Rev, thank you for listening to the voice of God and taking the time to nurture a virtual stranger. Thank you for being patient with me (in your own way). Even now, I can hear you saying, "Chadia, you are running" and I can also see that little knowing smirk that sometimes irritated me. But it's all love. From the moment we met, the connection was there and I think we agree that it is one that will hold life until one of us is called home to the Lord. These words come from a well spring of love.

To Miss Lana, thank you for always listening, being supportive and I can't forget cooking. You've taken care of me as if I am your own and in a short space of time I've become greatly indebted to you. You have such an amazing spirit; clothed in humility and generosity. It's a rare thing for me to find someone whom I admire deeply but you've managed to find yourself on the list whose membership can be counted on one hand. I admire you. The love of Christ is not only something you preach but you practice it and I think to date, you are by far the greatest representative of the love of Christ that I've seen on this earth. I hope to emulate half of that. I love you!

To the select few whom God has placed in my life and allowed me to share personal experiences, thoughts and have deep discussions with, I say thank you to you all. The Lord used you to help open my eyes on so many issues. So to Pudgin, Maf, Jeebo, El, Chadel, T, Totones, Buckaroo, Schref, Kesha, I say thank you for being open about your lives, experiences and thoughts where men, women and relationships are concerned. Our discussions and debates are legendary and something that I will definitely tell my children about. I Love you all!

To my boy, Pierre, I say thank you for always making the time. I don't ever remember a time where I asked for your help and you turned me down. You are in part responsible for the cover and for all the other times, you've so often created opportunities for my gifts and talents to be recognized, I am grateful. I am indebted to you on so many fronts. You are appreciated..

To my editor, Mrs. Cherisse Forde, I ask, "Who knew that writing could be so much fun?" I enjoyed

this journey and I surprisingly enjoyed the editing process. The debates, the discussions and the laughs made this journey so much more enjoyable. Thanks for your input with the prayers. Your work was appreciated and so are you.

To Mr. Bertrand John, you're so much more than my graphic designer. You are my brother and my friend. You worked with me at one of the lowest points in my life and the Lord used you to help usher me to one of the highest thus far. My prayer for you is always that the Lord increases you and your family and blesses the work of your hands. I also want you to know, that as long as the Lord approves (which I think he does) wherever he takes me, I'm taking you for the ride with me, B. Blessings, my brother.

Lastly, but most certainly not least, all the honor and glory belongs to God Almighty. Thank you for using me. Thank you for pursuing me when I run off and decided that I didn't want to do what you had planned for me. Thank you for always placing the right people in my life for the corresponding seasons. Thank you for ensuring that greatness is my portion during my journey on earth.

## **FOREWORD**

**By the Reverend Ian Cummings**

In March of 2014 I had the opportunity of meeting Chadia Maturin through a mutual friend. We chatted on Skype of my visit to St Lucia for a prophetic and deliverance conference and at that time I requested her input in the area of music and worship for my upcoming visit.

I honestly believe the writing and the message of this book is much needed today not just in the churches, but in schools, in every home, in every young person's hand, for the mothers, fathers, pastors and leaders.

As founder of Rules of the Arena, a foundation that deals with all levels of sexual immorality at an international level, I have discovered that the violation of purity is the base for most of the problems and struggles that people are faced with; not just sexual but emotional, mental, physical and also spiritual.

Challenge? Oh yes it is, to walk in sexual purity. There is no one time fix but a daily requirement of killing the flesh, thoughts and habits that have already been cultivated. What we are faced with today is people who proclaim purity via virginity but are not pure in the sight of God and it brings me joy to see this misconception addressed.

Chadia, based on her personal experience in this arena – a virgin her self – is shares from the depths of her heart, the stumbling blocks and hurdles which she has encountered on this journey that many are presently on. Some live to tell the story of how they withstood and won the battle. I consider the openness and the honesty with which she has willingly put herself out there is one of unselfish love and a picture of a vessel in the hands of the potter saying, “I am ready to be used by you.”

As you read this book you will be challenged in your walk with God, and you will be ushered into a place of self-examination whether you are a virgin or not. This is the book that we have been waiting for. It is not enough to be a virgin.

*“I Masturbate, but I’m better than you because you have had sex; I’m better than you because you are fornicating and I’m a virgin”*

Being a Virgin is not Enough....

*Reverend Ian E Cummings*



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## WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS BOOK

### *What's Up with All of These #hashtags?*

One of the first things that you'll notice in this book is that the chapter titles are in hashtag format. The inspiration came from the fact that this book was birthed from the success of a blog post. I also decided to use the hashtag format because it would allow for me to seamlessly track the discussions that stem from this book across social media platforms and across the web.

### *You Are Challenged*

Many of the comments and messages that I received after writing "Being A Virgin Isn't Enough" had a common theme: "you challenged me." I love a good challenge, and so with your permission and participation, I would like to keep the theme of challenges going by continuing to challenge you.

At the end of almost every chapter you will come across a challenge or two. I promise you that every challenge will contribute to the growth and development of your purity walk and inadvertently to your Christian walk.

In the event that a chapter has more than one challenge, the first challenge will be less time consuming and will have a more immediate bearing on the subjects being discussed in subsequent chapters. The secondary challenges can be completed over a period of time. But do note that despite their categorization as "secondary" challenges, they are as important as the primary ones.

### *Quotes and Definitions*

At the start of a chapter and in between pages you'll see quotes and sometimes the definition of important words. The quotes come from some of my favorite authors as well as from the blog post which influenced this book and the definitions off course come from a dictionary. I hope that these quotes will cause reflection and thought.

### *Bible Verses*

I believe that there is nothing as life changing as the Word of God. Coupled with the weapon of faith, the Word will pierce your heart and tear down philosophies, thoughts and imaginations that will keep you from walking in the freedom of Christ given redemption.

I can sincerely say that a large part of the metamorphosis that has happened in my life came about by the Word of God. I may not listen to a human being (not necessarily a good thing) but if they can show me how Scripture supports their point of view, I'm all ears.

### ***Prayer***

If you have any hope of attaining any measure of success on the journey of purity then prayer is something that will become an important part of your life. The decision to walk in sexual purity is not a one-time fix. There will be a daily requirement to kill flesh, and thoughts and habits that have already been cultivated, and sometimes sheer will-power just isn't enough. Sometimes only the strength of God can carry you through. After all, it is in our weakness that He is strong.

### ***A Few Things to Note:***

#### ***1***

The word purity makes reference to sexual purity.

#### ***2***

The word virgin makes reference to both those who've never had sexual intercourse as well as those who have experienced intercourse but have dedicated themselves to a life of celibacy. I call them born-again virgins.

#### ***3***

Be sure to get yourself a journal. You will be amazed at the things that you discover about yourself during this journey. It will also give you the opportunity to look back and see how you've grown

## #introduction

When I first wrote the blog post “Being a Virgin Isn’t Enough,” I was a 22 year old University student who had taken up blogging to share life lessons with those who would care to read. I never dreamt that anything that I wrote would have such widespread impact; at least not from my blog.

I remember that morning clearly; it was 2 am, and I had to play the keyboard for the worship session in church later that morning. Still, I couldn’t sleep. I had just experienced a string of difficult episodes where my purity walk was concerned and they weighed heavy on my mind. I pulled out my laptop and began to type, finding solace in the clacking sound of the keys. If nothing else, this would help me figure out the things going through my head. Writing was often my escape.

I had found myself in a situation where I was still a virgin; I had never even kissed a man, yet I felt dirty and broken. And then it dawned on me that I had been duped. All this time, so much emphasis was placed on what I should not do physically. Don’t kiss, don’t touch inappropriately, don’t masturbate, and don’t have sex all fell into the list of things that I should not have been doing and I didn’t do them. I felt some sense of pride that I had kept a promise that I had made to my 11-year old self: I wouldn’t have sex until marriage. Still, I felt like I had failed in a major way where purity and holiness were concerned.

I had had conversations that I should have never had. I had made promises that I had absolutely no intention of delivering on. I had been reeled in by the bait of curiosity into watching things that I shouldn’t have and where the subject of emotions was concerned, let’s not even go there. In an attempt to put it simply, I was a complete and utter wreck.

That morning, I made the post, and went back to bed. I got up a couple of hours later, showered and got dressed for church. I didn’t have time to check my email and I didn’t have a WordPress app on either my phone or iPad, but that afternoon, I would find out that thousands of young people all across the world felt exactly as I did – being a virgin just didn’t cut it.

Where had we gone wrong? I believe the issue is that what we had learnt on the subject of purity so often neglected the effects of factors such as the human element of emotion, identity, culture, environment, education and experience and I believe that these factors are central to an individual’s understanding of purity and the quality of their purity journey.

So what makes purity, purity? Why am I on this journey called purity? What can I do to better the quality of my purity walk? Why isn’t being a virgin enough? These are the questions that I try to

answer by sharing a host of my experiences, observations and some of the tricks of the trade that I've learnt along the way.

I pay close attention to the human rudiments that are so often forgotten especially where emotion, identity, feelings and urges are concerned. Most importantly, I really try to bring the Word of God into play. A large part of the changes that have taken place in my life have to do with the application of the Word of God.

It is my sincerest hope and deepest prayer that as you read that you will be challenged to step up your purity game. I pray that you will find answers to your questions. I pray that you will be floored with revelation and that your purity journey and more largely your life will NEVER be the same.

## BEING A VIRGIN ISN'T ENOUGH: BLOG POST

So you've just read the intro, and you didn't know that a blog post started all of this. You're wishing that you had access to it right this very moment. Have no worries, because I thought of you. This is the blog post that started it all:

*"It's 2:57 am and I can't sleep. God has placed some things of great significance on my heart as it pertains to relationships and emotions and how these things affect Christian men and women. I am a 22 year old Christian woman. I have never been in a relationship. My lips remain untouched. I am a virgin. Yet, I am not owner to that sense of wholeness and purity that should come with my chaste status.*

*During the past couple of weeks, I spent some time talking to God about that nagging feeling that stalked me; that feeling said, "Chadia, being a virgin isn't enough." For others, it would read that being celibate isn't enough. I found out that there was great merit to this uncomfortable feeling and the disconcerting thought which it bred, and I will share with you why.*

*I've never been in a relationship, but I'm not exactly the type of woman who shies away from men. I shy away from relationships, but not men. My personality is one that revels in winning. As such, I became a master of the game. I enjoyed mind games and the sense of conquest that came with them, and the man who was the quintessential flirt was my perfect prey.*

*I took pleasure in my ability to make a man fall, but remain detached. By the time I was 17, I had read so many books that explained the psychology of the man in contrast to the psychology of the woman that I had gleaned an understanding of men, well beyond my years. I understood things about them that they themselves were yet to become aware of. What I thought was fun, would taint something that I deemed very valuable: my purity.*

*In the Christian realm we often view purity as something having to do only with the physical; only as it pertains to sex. But I am fast learning that emotional integrity is a big part of purity. God started to reveal to me how we as young men and women give off pieces of ourselves to others who are not our spouses.*

*As a young woman, I shouldn't be doing for another man what only my husband should experience. Too many men have experienced the care and affection that only my husband should experience, too many men have heard me say words that only my husband should hear, and too many men have received the affirmation that only my husband should receive. Too many men have seen and experienced the power behind the woman that I am; the power that only my husband should experience.*

*As a young man, too many women should not have experienced the care and affection that only your wife should*

*experience, too many women should not have heard you say the words that only your wife should hear, and too many women should not have received the affirmation that only your wife should receive.*

*When you're young, armed with knowledge but not enough wisdom, the attachment (the individual to you) that comes with giving away these pieces of yourself deceives you into believing that you are in a position of power. You believe that these other people are getting hurt, but you have it under control. Trust me when I say that you have told yourself a big lie.*

*To young women, I say to you that you are compromising your emotional wholeness, which is unfair to both you and your future husband. To young men, I say to you that you are compromising your emotional wholeness which is unfair both to you and your future wife. We become nothing but robots of the game. The game was not created for us. We are Christians. It is not ours to play.*

*I asked myself if God were to allow me to meet my husband today, would I be in a place of emotional integrity that he is worthy of? How many men am I emotionally attached to? How many "friends" do I need to redefine my relationship with? Will I be able to love him as I should? Would I be as open as I could be? How unfair would it be to him, that another man has experienced what is his?*

*This is why I say that we simply become robots of the game. All my game playing has left me in a place of emotional brokenness. I shouldn't be afraid to become attached to someone if he is serious about me, and has created an atmosphere of trust and comfort, but I am. I shouldn't be afraid to share certain things with someone if he has created an atmosphere of trust and comfort, but I am. It is important to guard one's heart, but mine is in a maximum security prison.*

*Despite still having some unattached pieces from the puzzle of emotional wholeness and integrity, God has allowed me to put many of the pieces back together again. I don't flirt anymore. It is a dangerous and unfair game. I watch how I give compliments. There is a compliment and then there is the deliberate stroking of the ego.*

*I understand that it is not my job to make a man who is not my husband or intended husband feel like he is Superman. You affirm a man too much, he either becomes attached if he's not averse to the idea of a relationship or runs if he is averse. Affirmation is a powerful thing to a man, and if you can make him feel like he's Superman he also recognizes that you can become his kryptonite; meaning he recognizes that you are a force to be taken seriously.*

*I've learnt to set boundaries, and I've learnt to ask questions. I ask from the get go what a man's intentions are where I'm concerned. If you are not serious about me, then we shouldn't be having certain conversations, we shouldn't be sharing certain jokes and information, and you probably shouldn't be taking me out to nice, cozy dinners and giving me gifts.*



*I've also taken note of the things that I value. I understand that giving gifts is a big part of how I demonstrate love, so I don't give gifts to all and sundry. It may be a normal way of life to the man, but to me it's a big deal, and somewhat alters the way I feel about an individual.*

*I don't know how to guide a young man along the path of emotional integrity, but I can say this: I believe that God has called the young men in the body to stand apart from the young men of the world. They stand apart by understanding that their rightful place is the place of leadership. They stand apart by understanding that theirs is a role of protection, and subsequently demonstrating this comprehension by guarding and protecting the emotions of the young women with whom they interact. They stand apart by operating in integrity when pursuing a woman in the Body.*

*Gentlemen, it makes absolutely no sense pursuing women when you know that settling down is afar off for you. It is not your job to flatter a young woman that you have no intention of taking seriously, and you should feel absolutely no guilt about it. It doesn't matter how much you say that we are "just friends." If your mouth is saying one thing but your actions are saying another, the woman will most likely go with what you are doing. Do not be alarmed that even after you've said a million times that we are just friends that a woman falls for you, if you're treating her like only someone who is her man should.*

*My eyes have become heavy, and the clacking sound of the keys of my keyboard is no longer appealing. I have church in a few hours, but I would hope that this post would open the discourse on emotional integrity amongst young men and women of God, and even those who are in the world. After all, He came that we would all have life more abundantly. I'm off for now. And it is possible that you will hear more on this topic from me. Shalom!"*

I think the blog post pretty much sums it up and sets the stage for many of the things that will be discussed in this book. Too many Christian young people feel a sense of superiority (yes, I said it) and achievement when they've managed to withhold sexual intercourse before marriage. Now don't get me wrong, virginity and celibacy is a good thing. But the thing which really needs to be lived and celebrated is purity.

I believe that the time has come for us to get rid of the governing philosophy that says, "Hey, I lust, I watch pornography, I have no emotional integrity, I read a couple of romance novels a day, my grandmother would blush profusely if she heard some of the conversations that I have with my friends and sometimes I masturbate, but I'm better than you because you've had sex; I'm better than you because you're fornicating and I'm a virgin." If you're reading this and this happens to be your philosophy, I'm so sorry to say – then again I'm really not – that being a virgin is not enough.

It is not enough to have never been kissed by someone. It is not enough to have never been fondled. It

is not enough that you have never penetrated a woman. It is not enough that your hymen is still intact. It is not enough that you've never dated a man and have every intention of not having sex until you get married. It is simply not enough! All of these things do have value, but again I say it is not enough.

When God designed the laws of purity he didn't design them in order that hymens stay intact or that men never have experienced the beauty of release before marriage. These are simply a few of the consequences of the laws of purity. They do not in any way equate purity. To convey this in logical terms, a cross section of the consequences of a thing do not in any way equate to the thing, and this is why I say that where purity is concerned, "Being a Virgin Isn't Enough."

## **PRAYER**

*Dear Lord, as I begin this journey of enlightenment on purity, I pray that you open my mind and heart to grasp all that you are saying to me through this book. Grant me the knowledge and wisdom to understand it all and apply it to my life so I can better serve and please you. In Jesus' name,*

*Amen*

# #thelawsofpurity

By now, you may have gathered that the definition of purity goes way beyond “being a virgin.” I’ve learnt that the laws which govern this important state or form of worship guide us emotionally, mentally and physically, and it is only when these three aspects of our lives have come into a state of rightness that we can truly claim that we have somehow entered the arena of success in our journey to purity .

## ***Mental***

*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

*Phillipians 4:8 (KJV)*

Purity of the mind may very well be the most important aspect in establishing and maintaining purity. What we allow past the gates (eyes, and ear) of our mind will affect the creation of our identities which will in turn have a domino effect on both what we do physically, as well as the emotions that we feel.

What do we listen to? What is the essence of our conversation? Is it seasoned with salt? Does it edify? What do we spend our time watching? What do we read? Are these things of any virtue? Do they bring praise unto God? What philosophies do we submit to? Are they in keeping with the Word of God?

As you read, you may begin to see that the things which you have allowed to take root or have not allowed to take root in your mind is the core of your problems. This certainly was the case for me. I allowed what I shouldn’t have and didn’t place emphasis on what I should have. The effects of this fatal mistake eventually trickled down into how I viewed emotions, how I viewed them determined how I managed them and how I managed them played a large role in the determination of my level of emotional integrity.

## ***Emotional***

*Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.<sup>24</sup> Keep your mouth free of perversity; keep corrupt talk far from your lips.<sup>25</sup> Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you.<sup>26</sup> Give careful thought to the<sup>[a]</sup> paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways.*

- *Proverbs 4:23-27 ((NIV))*

The above verses really bring one into a place of deep introspection. What are we allowing access to our hearts? Are we entertaining relationships that we know are going to leave us open to bitterness, distrust and unforgiveness? What issues is this friendship/relationship going to produce? Are we careful in selecting our paths? Is this the right person to trust with our emotions?

While the verses above do not ask to close our hearts to all emotional entanglements, they do pinpoint the importance in choosing well. We must choose well what we say and to whom we say it, what we listen to and from whom we listen to it, who we open our hearts to, where we go and how we go about going because they will affect the emotions that we produce. Our choices – the things we let affect our emotions – are the source to the issues of life, and sometimes that issue just happens to be purity.

## ***Physical***

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Put the entire scripture reference like above*

- *Romans 12:1 (KJV)*

The physical is what we often associate purity with. It has been largely proliferated that purity is all about not having sex. It's way more than that. In addition to taking into account the importance of the emotional and mental aspects of purity, I believe that there are issues that go beyond just having sex that are associated with physical purity.

At the very least, we must come to an understanding that what we do with our bodies is essentially our reasonable service unto God; it is worship. I believe that when we come into comprehension of these things that many of the things which we now do with our bodies and render acceptable, will become unacceptable.

## *The Laws*

*Law #1:* Transformed Mind

*Law #2:* Guard Your Heart

*Law #3:* Bodies = Living Sacrifice

**CHALLENGE: FIND OUT WHO YOU ARE**

Knowing who you are is of immense importance. Your knowledge of self will not only affect your relationships, and interactions with other human beings but it will also affect your spiritual well-being. As you move on to subsequent chapters, I promise you that the value of this challenge will become clearer.

So how do I find out who I am? I recommend:

**BRIGGS-MYERS PERSONALITY TEST**

My youth leader introduced this personality test to my youth group when I was about 16 years old. I found it to be one of the most accurate gauges of personality. The knowledge that I gained allowed me to understand myself better, accept both my strengths and weaknesses and work on converting my weaknesses into strengths.

So this is how it works: based on your responses to a list of questions, you will be assigned a four letter personality type. If you use the FREE test on [www.mypersonality.info](http://www.mypersonality.info), in addition to being told what your personality type is, you will be given a brief overview of what that personality type entails as well as the strengths and weaknesses associated with that personality type.

When you do complete the test, take note of five strengths and weaknesses that you believe most accurately describe you. You can list them below.

PERSONALITY TYPE:

STRENGTHS

# WEAKNESSES

# **CHALLENGE: WHAT DO THE PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE THINK ABOUT YOU?**

Sometimes we have our own perceptions of ourselves but I think that we get the best picture of ourselves when we take into account our perception as well as the perceptions of others. I have provided you with a list of questions below. Pick at least two people closest to you and ask them to answer the questions.

When you're doing this challenge BEG your friends to be brutally honest. Assure them that you won't hold their opinions against them and make a conscious decision within yourself to not even dispute what is presented to you. Only take this challenge if you prepare yourself because you may flip when you see what some people really think about you.

## QUESTIONS

**1**

What does it feel like to be around me at my best?

**2**

What does it feel like to be around me at my worst?

**3**

What do you admire about the way I live my life?

**4**

Are there any areas of my life that you find off-putting?

**5**

What are ways I could be a better friend?

**6**

Is there anything that I could do to become a better communicator?



**7**

Which of my character traits will be a blessing to my spouse?

**8**

Which of my character traits will be a burden to my spouse?

## #thegamesweplay

*“We become nothing but robots of the game. The game was not created for us. We are Christians. It is not ours to play.”*

*- from Blog post: Being A Virgin Isn't Enough*

### ***RULE#1: YOU'RE NOT DESPERATE***

And really you're not! Don't call after the first date. Let him/her wait. You're too much of a great catch to call and say that you enjoyed his/her company. He/she can wait. He/she is dispensable. After all, you're not desperate. Then again, if he/she doesn't call first it's time to move on to the next available one.

### ***RULE #2: NOTCHES AND PROWESS MEASURE YOUR WORTH***

Let's measure your worth by the number of men you can kiss or have sex with. Let's measure your worth by the number of girls on campus that you can get past third base with. The fullness of your womanhood is determined by the number of men who desire you. Your manhood is validated by the number of notches on your bedpost.

### ***RULE #3: NO EMOTIONS ALLOWED***

Never show emotion. Always be unaffected by what the opposite sex does. There are plenty of fish in the sea. Be able to sleep with any number of men without becoming attached. You're an independent woman. You don't need a man for anything but sex. What? You're attached to her? Are you certain that you are owner to a pair of balls or do you have a vagina?

### ***RULE #4: FLIRT UNCONSCIONABLY!***

Flirt. Flirt as much as you can. Flirt unconscionably. If someone gets hurt in the process it's their fault. You never said that you had feelings for them. Bat your eyelashes coyly. Give smiles that speak empty promises. If he happens to think that you like him more than a friend, he's tripping. Compliment her

incessantly. She's a robot. She won't like you. If she falls for you she is nothing but a confused human being.

### ***RULE #5: ABSOLUTELY NO APOLOGIES***

There is an arrogance and ruthlessness that comes with playing this game. You owe no apologies. You are justified in everything that you do. You're following the rules. It's a dirty game. It's like the Warren Sapp – Mike Sherman controversy. Within the context of the game of football, the hit was legal, so was there really any need for Sapp to make apologies for the consequences that followed the hit?

### ***GOAL: WOO AND SUPPRESS***

Yeah, home girl got game, right? I see you smiling and taking a few notes. Forget it. The end is painful. It's a game that I should have never been playing and it isn't a game that you should be playing either.

As children of God, we have been called to be separate and come out from among them that constitute the world (2 Corinthians 6:17). We have been given gifts and titles that children of the world do not possess. We have been called a royal priesthood, and a peculiar people. We SHOULD be different because we have accepted the gift of eternal life. But, I am sad to say that often times this is not the case.

More often than not, I see the world deciding that it should set the standards and I see the young men and women who form what is supposed to be the royal priesthood blindly following. Why is that? I believe that the issue is one of identity ignorance. So you're lost. How does that apply to purity?

I'll make the vision plain. But first, allow me to share with you my story of how I became a player in a game that wasn't mine to play and maybe you'll understand where I'm coming from. From my journal:

*If you've listened to the songs that I sing, or the poetry that I write, or even the songs from other artists that I like, it will become clear that one theme is common to them all. It is the question of "Who Am I?" When it comes to music, poetry or even writing, I am profoundly transparent, but those who know me personally will say that I am a tough nut to crack. I can be an excellent conversationalist on topics ranging from politics, to technology, to law and relationships, but anytime the subject veers towards the topic of "Chadia" and who she intrinsically is I shut down like a CPU infected with a potent virus. Bullying changed my life.*

*I entered the First Form in September 2002. I was a happy 11 year old with lots of friends, I was confident and full of promise. In a matter of months I would become a pale version of the person who entered the first form. I come from a society where the subject of bullying is not paid much attention to. It is considered an "American" phenomenon. In the Caribbean kids simply joke around with each other and those who are constantly ribbed on see it as nothing but jokes and cherished mementos for the future. I am living proof that this is a myth, because 10 years onwards I am still healing from the sting of rejection.*

*My classmates did not like the manner in which I spoke. One guy turned up his nose and said that I constantly speak like I'm in a courtroom. I tried to appease them, and the well spoken 11 yr old who entered the first form also became fluent in slang. I was never the most feminine young lady. I always loved to hang out with the guys. I loved sports, and I loved wrestling with my guy cousins. I love being with my dad and helping him out on the wood work projects. I always felt that I could do exactly what the guys could do. But after bullying that part of my personality manifested itself in a distinct bounce that allowed me into someone's inner circle: the guys.*

*Despite my not so feminine ways, I liked boys. I loved them. But in hindsight, I realized that perhaps I was simply trying to follow the crowd and I jumped into something that was way ahead of me. I was always smart. People knew it and I knew it. But Form One was a whole new ball game. I was put in a class with girls who owned both beauty and brains. I was outclassed; or so I thought. By the first month of school, practically all of them had boyfriends, and this new and foreign feeling of rejection hounded me until I decided that I should probably get one of my own.*

*I sat in class next to a guy named Waldorf\* and we had a decent camaraderie; better than what I had with anyone else in the class, and somewhere in the back of my mind I decided that I liked this guy, and maybe he should be my boyfriend. Back in the day, home girl had absolutely no game, and I cringe in pain as I think about my approach to the situation and how I possibly misconstrued civility as being affection. In my defense, I was being led on. My interaction with Waldorf was not limited to the boundaries of class. We had interactions out of class, and from these interactions I gleaned that possibly feelings were mutual. In class he was one person, on the phone he was another. I much preferred the Waldorf on the phone.*

*I vaguely remember an incident in class where I was being picked on by a few guys in class, and he never stood up for me. He didn't even wimp out and remain quiet. Instead, he joined the crew. That day I learnt that I was all on my own. I learnt to expect no one to come to my defense.*

*It's funny that I was always quick to stand up for someone who I felt was being pushed around, but no one ever did the same for me. The most hurtful experience with this was when my only friend from primary school also joined the "Make Fun of Chadia" crew. I learnt a lesson that I would forever carry with me: Depend on no one.*

*Maybe it's because I was too sheltered, Maybe it's because I'm an ultrasensitive human being or maybe it's because I took myself too seriously. But the persistent feeling of being the class piñata changed me. I became hard, sharp tongued and extremely introverted. I could easily cut someone down with a few well-placed words. I took pleasure in it, and being the perfectionist that I was, I mastered it. I learnt how to have conversations that were seemingly deep but were intrinsically fickle. I felt that if I did this well, people would have nothing to hurt me with, and it proved true. I mastered speaking to others and making them feel comfortable to the point that within a matter of weeks they would reveal their deepest selves to me while learning nothing about me. I became selfish, and if I am to objectively assess this, deceptive.*

*Most victims of bullying cry, and become lesser versions of themselves in a noticeable way. I cried, but when I stopped crying, I became a monster. I saw no good in human beings. I learnt how to deal with them and what drove them and upset them, but I learnt these things not with good intentions.*

*By the time I was 15 I had learnt that guys were looking for something beyond the physical when they were looking for women to be serious about. They were intrigued by intellect, and my musical ability and I shamefully used the gifts and talents that the Lord had given to me to bless others, to hurt them instead. I intentionally made guys fall for me and laughed at how weak they were when I told them that I wasn't interested in them beyond the borders of friendship. I felt powerful. I was doing the hurting now.*

*I had become the poster child for "hurting people hurt people" and never had I felt more powerful. But I had also never felt so alone. Loneliness was my constant companion from the day I hit Form 1. It was the only friend that NEVER left, and never betrayed me, and in time I learnt to love and appreciate it just as it had enveloped and embraced me.*

*I'm now 21 and can assess the effects that bullying had on my relationships or for that matter on my ability to have healthy relationships. I have difficulty trusting others and socializing. As for dating, the truth is the man who decides to tackle this woman is coming in for a hell of a ride. I am selling no fairy tales. I am a broken woman. But, I'm worth it.*

*I don't understand what it is to have friends and I no longer know what it is to be a friend. I used to be the girl who would publicly bite off the heads of those who offended those whom I held closest to me, while chastising my "friends" for their wrong doings in private. I never used to speak about my "friends" behind their backs. If there is one good thing that bullying brought out in me, it was bluntness.*

*It was therefore no great task for me to speak about issues of difficulty with ease. I was, and I am brutally honest. The lack of this elemental part of my socialization saw me talking to myself a lot. Hey, at least it wasn't an imaginary friend. I was the only one who was there, so I spoke about the dreams that I had, the places that I wanted to go and the things that I wanted to*

*accomplish with Chadia. Chadia encouraged me, and told me to keep my head up because I was destined for greatness. I hadn't realized.*

*After I had stopped crying I became an uber confident individual; maybe too confident. I knew I was going places, and I knew that there was nothing in the world that I couldn't achieve if I put my mind to it.*

*I remember bringing my guitar to school to show off my musical skills. At that time, some of the guys in my class had seen me as just one of the guys, and just for the sake of proving a point, I told one of the guys in my class that I could get him aroused without touching him. The brother dared me! And let's just say after I'd whipped out my guitar and serenaded him with a song written just for him, I won that dare.*

*I was on a high. I had become everything that they told me that I wasn't. I had become the antithesis of who they said I was and what I was. I had been told that I was ugly and undesirable and I had made myself the envy of quite a few men. After all, men didn't desire ugly and undesirable, did they? I became the person who ribbed on others and not the person who was ribbed on. I became hard and cold. I stopped crying. I saw it as weak and undesirable. I stopped walking with my head down and practiced standing with a straight back in the mirror. I let no one tell me what was attainable and unattainable. I became fluent in sarcasm. I became the master of my destiny. I became a control freak. I became a serial perfectionist."*

As I read over the pasted excerpt from my journal, my eyes welled up with tears for the 11 year old version of me; the version of me who wasn't grounded in who she was. I became a player in a game that was not designed for me because I didn't know who I was or rather I didn't walk in an understanding of that knowledge. In addition to not knowing who I was, I didn't understand who I was in Christ and this is the primary reason why I became a leading scorer in a game that I should have been watching from the stands; a game that I should have been watching solely on the big screen.

I've seen the same thing happen to many other young people. You see, we sometimes fall into patterns of behavior and patterns of thought that are not representative of our identities because we really don't know and understand who we are in Christ. When we play by rules such as the 5 above we suppress who we were naturally created to be. We've adhered to the rules of a game that I call woo and suppress, a direct contradiction to the function of the emotional beings that we were created to be.

As human beings we were created to connect with other human beings. We were created in the image and likeness of a God who IS Love. We were created with emotions that when nurtured will translate

into beautiful expressions. But we've chosen to mar the beauty of that which God created and use it in destructive ways by first wooing it with great enthusiasm, and then abruptly shutting it down. The game of woo and suppress has left us with a confused and hurting generation.

The young men and women who should be part of the royal priesthood are confused about their identities and because of that they deceive one another. They woo enthusiastically and shut down with as much fervor. They go to the greatest lengths of pursuit yet deny that relationship is the desire of their hearts.

Young women across the body have their hymens intact but their hearts have been ripped out and stomped on. Young men have never experienced the gift of sharing a woman's body, but they question greatly whether there is anything of value in those whom God has created to be their help mates. They pick up habits that will be detrimental to the maintenance of a relationship of value.

I think the time has come for us to take an education about who we are – not from the magazines or books that we read nor from the television shows that we watch or the music that we listen to but from the Word of God. I think that we've let society dictate to us what we should be and I think the time has come for us to truly embrace who we are in Christ. When we grasp this understanding it will begin to direct the choices that we make in every facet of our lives.

### ***The Difference Between Who You Are and Who You Are in Christ***

If you've completed the first challenge: Find Out Who You Are, then you know what your four letter personality type is. You know the traits and characteristics – that for the most part – constitute who you are. Although this is not your identity in Christ, there is importance in understanding who you are, and what you bring to the table. It allows for greater acceptance of self and it creates the opportunity for you to convert weaknesses into strengths and to pinpoint that which is not in alignment with the Christian identity.

Finding out my personality type helped me to understand many things about myself. I understood why I appeared less emotional than most women, why I can be a source of great intimidation to most men, why I thrived well in a leadership competency, why I appear immensely critical, the reasons behind my leadership style, why I reacted to bullying in the way which I did and even why it was always my desire to be at the top of my game concerning my emotions.

It was because by nature, I'm highly competitive, analytical and I'm a perfectionist. This isn't to say that everything I learnt about myself was good or in keeping with what Christ had said about who I am in Him. But it was certainly a blessing to be able to pinpoint that which was not in alignment, and make the conscious decision to align it.



# CHALLENGE: EMOTIONAL INTEGRITY TEST

**Instructions:** Fill in the blank space with **Y** for **Yes** or **N** for **No**.

**1**

I am often aware when I develop feelings for someone of the opposite sex. \_\_\_

**2**

I can freely admit when I have feelings of affection for someone of the opposite sex. \_\_\_

**3**

I can freely admit and express when I've experienced emotional hurt. \_\_\_

**4**

It is easy for me to apologize when someone has communicated to me that I have hurt them. \_\_\_

**5**

Flirting is not a big part of my life. \_\_\_

If you found yourself answering NO to the majority of the statements above, it is safe to say that you are in a place where your emotional integrity needs to be improved or increased. Have no worries. It's possible. I was in that very same spot about a year and a half ago, and I've experienced tremendous growth.

## **CHALLENGE: HEAR AND DO**

James 1:22 admonishes to apply what we learn in the word to our lives. I think this wisdom is highly relevant to cementing our identities in Christ. So these are the instructions for this challenge:

### ***Step One***

Pick 4 areas in your life that do not reflect what your identity in Christ should be – it can include self esteem, the way you view those of the opposite sex or your attitude when dealing with life's difficult situations.

### ***Step Two***

Select 4 verses that reflect what your identity in Christ should be. If you have difficulty finding a verse that fits your situation, ask friends, a youth leader or pastor or feel free to send me an email and we'll try to figure it out together.

### ***Step Three***

For the next 4 weeks, pick one verse each week, and consciously and intentionally apply its essence to your conduct and thought. It is my experience that if you tell yourself anything long enough that you'll believe it and when you believe it you make a conscious effort to become it.

# **WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST**

## ***Royal priest hood and peculiar people***

The words royal and peculiar say it all. We have been given the status of kings and queens in God. We are to be different from what is normal. As kings and queens we are also rule makers and standard bearers.

Therefore our worth is not determined by the number of men who desire us or the number of women whom we can bed. Our acceptance of the gift of Christ makes us ROYALTY. Take ownership of that royalty. Walk like it, think like it, speak like it, and dress like it. Why not? You're ROYALTY!

If you download "I AM Royalty" into your system I can guarantee you that your life will change. If you walk with your back slumped it will become a thing of the past. If you were afraid to look people in the eyes when speaking to them you will slowly step into your God-given confidence. The acceptance of Christ is personal development at its best.

## ***Holders of the Fruit of the Spirit***

We sometimes neglect the value of the fruit of the Spirit in our Christian walk. But these essentials are basically what let others know that we are different and that we're guided by a force that calls for extraordinary living: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control; there is not a place in the world that you will go to and find a law against these things.

This is an excellent mirror to put your personality to stand in front of. It will show you the things that aren't so beautiful to look at where your identity in Christ is concerned. It's simple (much easier said than done). Pick out all the things that violate the existence of the fruit.

## ***Fearfully and wonderfully made***

When one takes into consideration the complexities of the human form one must come to an undoubted conclusion that humanity is the product of precision of thought. This is the essence of what David tries to capture in Psalms 139. God knows every complex detail about you. He knows because you were created with great care and concern. How marvelous are His works! How marvelous are you!

As you go through life some people will do and say some things to you that will cause you to question if your life is of any value. Don't believe them. You will be doing yourself an injustice. God thinks so much more of you. He took time to think about every muscle, every sinew, every joint, every bone, every connector, every feature, the texture of your hair, the color of your skin and the width and breadth of your nose, and while other human beings may be incapable of appreciating that which has crafted with such precision, be mindful and be convinced that you are fearfully and wonderfully made.

I've come to recognize that everything about Chadia is deliberate, and you too should come to realize that everything about you is deliberate.

### ***Demonstrator of Love***

1 Corinthians Chapter 13 is a well known portion of scripture – both to those who profess to be Christians and to those who do not. These verses should govern how we deal with everyone not just men and women that we are in relationships with, not just fiancés and fiancées and not just husbands and wives. It should also govern friendships.

The wisdom found in 1 Corinthians also speaks to love in a platonic sense. If applied to all of our relationships and friendships, we will find that unforgiveness, bitterness and hurt will be less able to take root in the soil of our hearts.

# #emotionalintegrity

*As a young woman, I shouldn't be doing for another man what only my husband should experience. Too many men have experienced the care and affection that only my husband should experience, too many men have heard me say words that only my husband should hear, and too many men have received the affirmation that only my husband should receive. Too many men have seen and experienced the power behind the woman that I am; the power that only my husband should experience.*

*-from Blog Post "Being A Virgin Isn't Enough"*

A couple of years ago, I found myself in a situation where a friendship of mine became broken. If you ask me, the issue stemmed from a lack of open communication. But, God in His Lordship also allowed me to pick up a few things from this painful experience. So this is how the story goes....

My friend made and acted on the assumption that I liked him as more than a friend. His reactions to the assumption were "imma cut you off" and subsequent withdrawal. Let it be known that not much gets past me, but even if I wasn't observant I would see this. The friendship went from being distinguished by keeping in touch all day via FB to saying hi, hello and nothing of substance once a week.

Let it also be known, that I'm the kind of woman who will call you out. So after recognizing that the friendship had gone down from 20 to 0, I asked my friend what was going on. My exact question was, "Did I do anything to offend you?" The essence of his response was "No." Long story short, when he finally got around to explaining what fueled his behavior, I was shocked and I was hurt. Apparently, I liked him as more than a friend.

## *emotions*

*any strong agitation of the feelings actuated by experiencing love, hate, fear, etc., and usually accompanied by certain physiological changes, as increased heartbeat or respiration, and often overt manifestation, as crying or shaking*

*-dictionary.reference.com*

Let it be known: Chadia is Sherlock Holmes III. I am a problem solver by nature, so after my initial

shock and hurt, I immediately sought out what would encourage that thought process on his part. What could I have possibly done to cement that foundation?

The truth is that I didn't see him as more than a friend. He was in a place in his life where I would only be stupid to entertain non-platonic feelings for him if I had any and I had my thing going on with someone else (unbeknownst to him). In the limitations of my human wisdom, I could see not ONE thing that would have given credence to what he claimed. Yes, I invited him to my house with about 15 other people. Yes, I was part of a group that took him out to dinner for his birthday. And yes, I was always available. But isn't that what friends do?

I can't say that I have come to a conclusion about what exactly gave him the perception. Some of my friends think that it was the other way around; that he liked me and didn't know how to deal with his emotions. Whatever the reason, I do know that after some continued introspection, I decided to uphold responsibility for his thought process.

I recognized that whether or not I believe that I did anything to validate his assumptions that I had not intentionally governed our friendship in a manner that said "just friends." God made it plain as day to me: It didn't matter whether I thought I did anything to warrant his assumptions but He (God) was now holding me accountable for what I had not done, for this, and all the other hearts that I had not guarded. Way to flip the script on a sister huh?

It was a difficult pill to swallow and it became even more difficult when I recognized that this one time, I had left myself bare. I guess you can say it would be an experience of feeling similar to having unprotected sex for the first time, and finding yourself with a pregnancy that you are unprepared for. Without even recognizing it, I had become attached. The problem wasn't even being attached. It was that I had not recognized that I was. I was stark raving mad and the state of my emotional integrity was about to unravel right before my very eyes.

### ***Integrity***

***a***

*adherence to moral and ethical principles; soundness of moral character;  
honesty*

***b***

*the state of being whole, entire, or undiminished*

In all fairness to the young man, he was doing what most men in the body won't do. He valued our friendship and in his eyes, he was trying to save us both from a potentially volatile emotional situation. He may not have possessed the tools to do so well, but he certainly deserves kudos for desiring to do the right thing.

So, uh... nice story, but I'm lost. Emotional Integrity?

Absolutely not! It wasn't a ramble. It served its purpose if it drew you into the confusion of thought and emotion that plagued me during this period of my life and if you understood and identified with this mass of confusion then you may be far from a place of emotional integrity. I've learnt that most times when we find ourselves in situations of confusion and lack of definition such as the one described above, it is because we have no emotional standards or integrity. We lack consistency in the things which govern our emotional realm or sometimes we simply don't have any rules that govern how we manage our emotional affairs.

This experience was one of the incidents that allowed me to recognize that I lacked emotional integrity. Here I was without a grip on my emotions and a lack of understanding on what was going on in my emotional realm. My emotions were all over the place and it was a result of poor management on my part. Secondly, I see a lot of the elements necessary to begin a discourse on the topic of emotional integrity. But first, what is emotional integrity?

Emotional integrity can be defined as a place of emotional wholeness characterized by deep emotional awareness, emotional honesty, emotional morality (the guardianship of hearts) and accountability.

### ***Emotional Awareness & Emotional Honesty***

Let's keep it real! And yup, that's really what emotional awareness and honesty is about: Keeping it real! It's about recognition and admission. Too often, we consistently lie about our emotions or our feelings where the opposite sex is concerned. It can either be because we are not emotionally aware (we don't know how to pinpoint what we're feeling) or because we're emotionally dishonest (we cannot come into a place of admitting or acknowledging that we are owners to certain types of emotion/feelings). These habits are cultivated from many seeds.

Some people grow up in churches with a strict dating or "liking" policy that makes it appear almost

sinful to have feelings of affection for someone of the opposite sex. Others are relegated to the rules and patterns of culture. For example, if you're from a Christian, Caribbean family like mine, you know that your hormones had better not start acting up before you reach 18. On the other hand, some people had hosts of traumatic experiences in their lives that left them raw and afraid to express emotion and to receive expressions of emotion from someone of the opposite sex.

I used to be one of the people who found it difficult to admit that I cared about someone of the opposite sex. Just in general, I found it difficult to voice my care and concern. I conducted my platonic relationships in a manner that was almost devoid of feeling yet overflowing in support. For whatever reasons – most likely they are not in keeping with the Word or design of God – you may find yourself uncomfortable with emotion and the expression of emotion.

For me it was for the sake of preserving that hard exterior that I had projected for so many years. For me, it was for the sake of preserving the walls that I had taken so much time, care and effort to build. But hear this, I found that when I was able to come into a place where I was able to say, “Yes, I like him,” “Yes, my care for him has fueled this action or behavior,” I was better able to prepare myself to deal with the consequences of that truth.

The truth may have been that I like him but he's unsaved, he's deeply intellectual but doesn't acknowledge God or sometimes it was that I can work with what is before me but I'm really not ready to be in a relationship at this stage in my life. The truth IS that I've met a few brothers who were dangerous to my equilibrium and to my stance in Christ and worst yet, I liked them. Whatever the truth was or is, I was and I am able to deal with it by acknowledging it.

I know that some of you reading this may have also come across the grandsons and granddaughters of Delilah and don't front: you were attracted to them. Some of you are just plainly and simply in love with the proverbial “bad boy” or “bad girl.” It's possible that your mind needs to be renewed... That was a joke. But on a note of seriousness, it is possible that by pinpointing and acknowledging how you feel about him/her that you can plan your way forward.

You may decide that you need to spend less time interacting with him/her on social media or via Whatsapp, and sometimes you may decide that you need to cut him/her off completely. But, I can guarantee you that denial of your feelings doesn't make them obsolete.

### ***Denials of Affection***



I know of people whose feelings of affection I can pinpoint long before they can admit it to themselves or anyone else. I've also seen it play an elemental role in the destruction of their purity and throw them into a world of hurt and turmoil. I have observed situations where people denied, denied, and continued to deny their feelings for someone of the opposite sex until their admissions were too late to save them the fall that went along with their affections.

In both cases their denials stemmed from the knowledge that those close to them would not be receptive to them entertaining a relationship with the young man chosen. For one, it was because of his spiritual disposition at the time and for the other it was because of his reputation around town. Whatever the reasons, their denials led them into a place where accountability was nonexistent and where there is no accountability, anything goes. After all, you can't hold someone accountable for something intangible/unseen if they're vehemently denying it.

In a situation similar to the ones above, my advice is that although your family or friends may not necessarily deem the man/woman of your affections a good fit for you, keep it real! Keeping it real helps to keep the lines of communication open and you NEVER know they may begin to help you see things that affection would probably have you blinded to.

Now, I speak to my brothers. I have not forgotten you. I can't forget you because where the denial of affection is concerned men tend to do it more than women especially if they're in a place in their lives where they have no intentions of settling down. Again, I think it boils down to how the church has taught us to manage the things we feel – unrealistically and without thought.

Gentlemen, acknowledging that you feel something for a woman does not inadvertently mean that you wish to be in a relationship with her. Then again, I've seen brothers use this very same argument to justify misleading a sister. In this vein, I must also say that an acknowledgement of affection does not also mean that you get to treat this woman like she is your woman. Instead, the acknowledgement should be used to help you decide what your next step is. Are you going to pursue or are you going to take a step back?

### ***Denials of Hurt***

I know of people who cannot admit when they're hurt and in the name of keeping it 100, I will say that I am one of the chief culprits. In the story above, I mentioned that I had left myself bare and as a result I ended up being hurt but what I didn't mention was that when my friend finally admitted why he had withdrawn from me, I behaved very poorly. I think back and I cringe because it was poor, y'all!

I'm not one to make excuses but for the sake of bringing some enlightenment to the situation, I can say that my poor behavior came about because I couldn't manage something whose existence I denied. I was hurting, but refused to acknowledge it. I had somehow convinced myself that I had wasted my time and that it was time to simply look forward. In my mind, I was unaffected. But it was all deception.

Hurt is something that can sometimes leave you feeling stupid and powerless. Why didn't you see it coming? How could you have left yourself so open? Stupid, stupid, stupid! And if you're someone like me who cringes at the thought of being vulnerable, let's put it at stupid times 100. No one likes to be hurt. But sometimes hurt comes, and when it does if you are not able to acknowledge its existence it will eat you inside out.

Unforgiveness, bitterness, anger and ruined relationships are all fruits of denied and unmanaged hurt. I know, because I experienced all of them and I am still dealing with erasing its bitter taste.

### *Unforgiveness*

A couple of years ago let me tell the tale: I hold NO grudges. Yeah right. The truth is that I base subsequent experiences on every prior experience and I often give special emphasis to the negative ones. But, I would come into an understanding of the deceptiveness of unforgiveness.

It's like a dangerous virus that doesn't have a trace until it is too late. It won't show forth itself until it has done its destruction. Unforgiveness is dangerous. It will not only cause you to live in bitterness but it will also cause you to live in fear. It will taint your emotional integrity in ways that you cannot imagine.

Someone hurt me, and I thought that I was over it. Every time the topic came up with my friends, my response was always, "I'm cool. I am so over it." After 6 months of saying, "I'm cool. I am so over it," I laid eyes on this individual for the first time since our disagreement. I was so mad, a vein in the back of my head almost popped. I was shocked. I thought I was over this. What was going on?

One word: unforgiveness.

Unforgiveness had come about because of a lack of emotional awareness and honesty, but it had also taken root because I didn't really have an understanding of what forgiveness was. Sometimes in our attempts to be like Christ we sometimes expect to operate with the immediacy that God does. But sometimes our desire to be like Christ can only be reproduced from a process.

When we think of God's forgiveness we think of immediacy. It is something that takes immediate effect; it is instant. God doesn't get upset with us after he has forgiven us. But, brother, sister, you are not God. If you can completely forgive with immediacy thank God for that grace, but if you find yourself wanting to punch a few walls or break a few plates (on the off chance that you have extreme anger issues) every time you see the person who hurt you, be comforted that forgiveness is a process.

The key is to continue to consciously forgive that person by interacting with him/her or responding to him/her in the language of forgiveness (praying for him/her, not treating him/her with contempt or disdain). Every time you get mad, every time that you're tempted to give a look of disgust, make a conscious decision to forgive and act in forgiveness.

You are required to do this until the thought of the experience or the sight of that individual produces within you a reason to praise and rejoice at the goodness of God and the lessons that he allowed you to learn; until that ONE negative experience does not become the benchmark by which you measure all situations, until you can understand that not all men and women will hurt you and until...

### ***Flirt Central***

Flirt central is an exceptionally dangerous and deceptive community located in the kingdom called "world". Yet, many young people from the kingdom called Christendom frequent this city. They leave what is safe and profitable to entangle themselves in a community whose people have intentional deception etched into the marrow of their bones.

By its very definition flirting is something that contradicts emotional honesty. Its purpose is to make things that are not, appear as if they are and even when both parties are conscious that they are in a flirt zone, it is still very possible for one or both to get drawn into a world where the things which they feel or experience during flirting become their reality. It is deceptive and pointless.

Those who have been burnt by flirting find themselves in a place where they fear the acknowledgement of feelings. I'm afraid to admit that I feel this way about him/her because I'm really not sure if he's playing or if he's serious. I don't want to be looked at as crazy. They become confused about their feelings and they are thrown into a state of emotional UN-awareness. Is what I'm feeling real? Does he like me? Is she really into me? Why are we conferring on each other this level of torture?

When we do, therein comes heartbreak. Therein comes young men calling my sisters crazy and young

women calling my brothers confused. But that's really what flirting is designed to do. It is designed to produce craziness and confusion. It isn't helpful. Flirt central is not a community that young men and women in the body should make entry into. So I say, brothers, do not intentionally make your sisters crazy and sisters, do not set out to confuse our brothers. How do you not do these things? It's simple. Don't flirt!

Heads up! If you can wean yourself off flirting immediately, I give you great applause because this was one of the most difficult things that I ever did. It had become such a permanent part of what I did and who I presented myself as that I sometimes felt like I was letting go of my identity. So just in case, you're having difficulty quitting, I say to you that the race is not for the swift.

## **CHALLENGE – WHAT IS YOUR LOVE LANGUAGE?**

Understanding the components that make up this test as well as the results of the test will be of immense value to your life. It will change the way you communicate and it will help you love more effectively.

This test will help you pinpoint both how you and others demonstrate and receive love and inadvertently better help you safeguard. In other words, you'll begin to understand why certain things that persons from the opposite sex do can affect you more than others. You may also begin to understand why certain things you do affect Jack or Jill so profoundly.

So here it goes...

You will find the free love language test as well as an expunction on the 5 love language at this link: [www.5lovelanguages.com/profile](http://www.5lovelanguages.com/profile).

The responses you get will make reference to how you receive love, but if you're also interested in gauging how you show love simply answer the questions in reverse.

# #theguardianshipofhearts

*To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact you must give it to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements. Lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket, safe, dark, motionless, airless, it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. To love is to be vulnerable.*

-C. S. Lewis

The guardianship of hearts places focus on factor of emotional morality. Where do we draw the line between rightness and wrongness? We certainly do not make this distinction by the world's standards. When have we ventured into territory that we shouldn't be in? How do we avoid hurting ourselves and others as much as possible?

I once attempted to define success and in one of my points I made reference to the importance of operating in integrity and having a value system. I also said that a great value system could be identified because the rules which govern it benefit all; not just the creator of that value system. I believe that guardianship of hearts is a value system and so its value must be extended to an entity outside of the self.

Before I delve into much I'm going to start off by saying something controversial; something contrary to what you've so often heard. So here it goes...

Guarding one's heart does not mean that one will be saved the experience of ever being hurt. It is possible that by guarding your heart that you will NEVER be hurt, but if you intend to live like a human being with emotions and not a robot, you should also know that there is no guarantee that guarding your heart will prevent you from ALL hurt. It can, however, save you from the unnecessary pain that sometimes results from the careless management of emotions.

C.S. Lewis said it best. To love is to be vulnerable. We love our pets and sometimes our feelings are hurt by their rejection of us, or their acceptance of someone else. Our parents who birthed us sometimes do and say things that cut us to the core, and therein come hurt. Our friends of the same sex can do things that cause us to question their loyalty toward us, and therein come hurt. So for me, it is really important to redefine what the phrase "Guard your heart" means in the context of purity.

I can tell you from the onset that it certainly does not mean shutting down and putting up walls to every male, or if you are a male, every female that you will encounter in your life. I can tell you from experience it is much easier to do the aforementioned than to do what I will prescribe. But I can also tell you that it is a lonely, guarded life; not much different from a prison. This one is simply emotional and self-created.

So often we unconsciously and indirectly hurt ourselves when we take “guarding your heart” to mean shutting people out. We deny ourselves real, genuine, healthy, and great relationships with people worthy of being in our hearts for example, mentors. Too often, people pass off their trust issues as guarding their hearts. However, sound judgment (emotional awareness and integrity) can cause us to decide who should be allowed into our hearts.

I believe that the phrase “Guard your heart” is best understood when the admonition of “Guard” is looked at as something that follows emotional awareness and honesty. So hey, “I have the potential to love this man” or “I can fall in love with this woman” is emotional awareness and honesty. “Wow, the stuff that I’m feeling gives this man the power to hurt me,” or “Wow, I’m really feeling her but I just don’t feel like I’m ready to give her my heart” is also emotional honesty and awareness.

This recognition then gives you an opportunity to decide if you can entrust your heart or emotions to that individual or if you’re even ready to consider being in a relationship at your present state. The recognition may give you an opportunity to shut down that unsaved brother who keeps saying that he’s going to give his life to the Lord but NEVER steps foot in the church or the recognition may very well lead you to see before you a man or woman whom you can trust with your emotions. Like I said, the guard follows emotional awareness and honesty.

### ***The Gangrene Effect***

**Note:** I’m a joker who has a gift for cutting people off (If I didn’t know better I would say that it is a spiritual gift) and when I’m about to cut you off those around me know the phrase: “I will cut you off like a limb infected with gangrene.” Allow me to school you on the gangrene effect – at least the positives of the effect.

In as much as guarding one’s heart does not mean putting up emotional barriers to every person from the opposite sex, please be aware that sometimes it is necessary to erect emotional barriers to attachments that you recognize could have adverse effects on your walk with Christ or your emotional well-being.

For example, as a Christian, you may not want to give emotional leeway to an unsaved individual or someone you recognize as manipulative/abusive. Some people need to be cut off as swiftly as a limb infected with gangrene before they begin to affect the core of you.

## **GUARDING THE HEARTS OF OTHERS**

*Don't be concerned for your own good but for the good of others.*

*-1 Corinthians 10:24*

I purposely titled this Chapter, “The Guardianship of Hearts” because I desired to discuss more than just the personal guard. I also wanted to discuss our responsibility to our fellow brothers and sisters and our fellow man in general. Sometimes we seem to be so focused on our own well-being and the fulfillment of our personal desires that we forget that we have a responsibility to others. And no, I am not tripping. Just read on, and you’ll see where I am coming from.

When God first placed on my heart the requirement for emotional integrity where my purity walk was concerned, I heard Him and I took Him seriously; right away. Home girl did not play around. When the Lord speaks I try to act in an immediate fashion (and if I keep it real, most times it’s because I like the idea; when I don’t it is a struggle).

The situation was like this: I was 22 years old, I had never been in a relationship but I had played a lot of games and I had very few healthy relationships with Christian men. As a matter of fact, it was very rare for me to find a man in church that I was attracted to. But let’s leave this discussion for another book.

Anyways, around this time I met a Christian young man. He was funny, we had easy conversation, he was sweet, the brother could encourage you with a portion of Scripture like no other and he appeared to be a genuine man of God just living life. I liked the guy. I liked his vibe, and I saw the potential for things to get a little flirtatious. It took time, but just as expected, he eventually stepped into the flirt zone with me.

Since I had stepped into the new era of Do-Right-Chadia, I expressed to him that I had come into a place where I no longer played these games. My flirt game was still up to par, but I tried to stay away from flirting as much as I possibly could. I really was tempted to play the game with him. It appeared that he would be a formidable opponent. But, I overcame the devil on my shoulder and I expressed to the young man that if I was going to get to know him that I was going to do it with respect and with sincerity. I had no interest in flirting with him or leading him on.



He said, “I’d love to just be genuine with you.” I was like hold up. Why on earth didn’t I speak to my Christian brothers before? He was too good to be true. If it was that easy, then I had been missing out. First ball and Chadia was already hitting a home run? First ball and like Chris Gayle I was about to hit a massive 6. The Lord was about to get me hitched up in this joint. Yeah right. It turns out that my suspicions were accurate. He was too good to be true (This is not to say that there are no good Christian men). Long story short, I found out that this one in particular had some issues with honesty. He was seeing someone.

Still, because of the circumstances surrounding our meeting, I decided to give him the benefit of the doubt. He had previously told me that he wasn’t seeing anyone, or interested in anyone and because I know that sometimes my sisters can get confused based on a man’s actions toward them (yes, I said it; sometimes we are tripping, especially if the brother speaks our love language) I decided that I needed clarification before I wrote him off as a liar.

So for the sake of clarification I went back to him and I asked pointed questions. “Is there anyone that you have your eyes on; that you think would make a good wife; that you’re presently speaking to; that you’re thinking of pursuing?” I must have asked the question in 6 different ways each time with specifics, and each time his response was, no.

His responses told me that I needed to redefine our friendship; for my sake and for the sake of the young woman whom he was seeing yet denying. I had learnt that she was emotionally fragile and not necessarily able to deal with the hurt that his actions would inflict on her. For the sake of my sister, I decided to take a step back.

I didn’t know the young lady. I didn’t and still don’t know what her face looks like and I wouldn’t be able to pick her out of a room even if she was the only one there. All I knew was her first name and her story. All I knew was that she had invested her time and emotion into a relationship with this guy who was speaking to me like he was going to wife me in the next year and denying her.

If he had met me in my unreformed state, he would have come into the knowledge and understanding of the power of a woman getting even; and truth be told, even in my reformed state – just for a moment – I thought about getting even. It felt like I had lost at something.

But from the eyes of reformation I saw him for who he was. I was him at some point in time. He was a young man with immense potential but being held by the murky waters of confusion. He was confused about his identity, he determined his worth with the wrong measurements and in as much as he was feeling himself he was really selling himself short.

I'm happy that I saw him through reformed eyes and walked away. I don't regret not getting even. Even though there was a noticeable shift in the flow of our conversation I continued to speak to him and to treat him with respect. I think, "If only I had let my ego take precedence. I would not have only been hurting myself, but I would be hurting him as well as the young lady."

The small bruise that I felt from being slighted would have only become a gaping wound if I had dressed it with the balm of revenge. Sometimes wisdom says to settle for a small scrape in the stead of a gaping wound. Just because this is a world filled with imperfect people, we cannot always escape the sting of hurt and sometimes our goal becomes lessening the magnitude of the wound as opposed to the entirety that characterizes safeguarding from hurt.

### ***Redefinition of Relationships***

When I speak of a redefinition of a relationship, I speak of change. It requires one to examine the terms and conditions of a particular relationship and to make the changes necessary where interaction and commitment are concerned. This is for the sake of guarding one's heart as well as for the sake of the guardianship of other hearts.

We live in an imperfect world and you may sometimes find yourself in situations that you never dreamed of; even in Christendom. Men and women in relationships and even married men and women will tell you that they are single when they are engaged, and for the sake of the guardianship of the heart of the other parties who may be involved in these triangles/circles, it will become important for you to be the bigger person and take a step back to redefine some relationships.

I know that some of you all don't want to hear this, but I must say it. The redefinition of relationships also comes into play when your friends of the opposite sex enter into committed relationships or make a commitment in marriage to men and women who are not you. This has always been a personal rule of mine and it has only served me well.

More often than not, friendships fill some need/void in our lives. In as much as we don't wish to admit it, the truth is that when two single people of the opposite sex share, interact and spend quality time there is always the potential for more to happen. I think I can only pick about 4 of my many male friends for which there is absolutely NO potential. Even then, I can't say 0%.

This may not apply to ALL your friends of the opposite sex, but if you take some time to examine why you are friends with the men or women that you're friends with you'll begin to see the bits that fall

into the category of potential: similar sense of humor, similar stance on faith, similar hobbies and interests, the ability to have conversations about nothing and everything, etc.

Sometimes, their significant others pick up on what we don't pick up on. They flash us these dirty looks, or get super territorial when we enter the room. Do jealous men and women exist? Yes, they absolutely do. However, there is sometimes merit to the concerns of these significant others. And even if there is no merit, how many of us are willing to step back for the sake of not creating a messy situation?

I know a whole lot of you are saying, "I was here first." Yes you were, but please, allow me to be straight with you. The moment that your friend decided to commence a relationship with someone who isn't you, that friend inadvertently decided that someone who isn't you should take first priority and relegated you to secondary priority.

Please, do not kill me. I am not saying that this friend no longer cares or has become unconcerned about you. I'm simply saying that he/she – as he/she should – has re organized the roles of various people (including yours) in their lives. And you should be happy to accommodate and encourage that shift, change or redefinition.

Where did you get this from?

Hey, my principle has Biblical foundations. In accordance with Biblical principle, when a man/woman becomes married it is a divine expectation that there is to be a reorganization of roles/redefinition of relationships with his/her parents, the most prominent and first relationship in his/her life. He/she is expected to leave his/her parents and cleave to his/her spouse.

The same can be applied to other relationships. He/she is also going to have to leave some friends in the name of cleaving, and sometimes when he/she can't do it, for his/her sake, and their spouses' sake, it will come down to you to do the right thing: Redefine.

### ***Ask Questions***

Many of us would forfeit the difficulties, hurt and pain that we sometimes face if only we would ask questions. I'm not speaking of the questions that would determine if someone is a good mate (these will be reserved for another book), but I make reference to the questions that would save us the world of hurt and pain that comes with confusion and blurred lines.

In a world where everyone is being encouraged to become skillful in the art of deception and where the player with the most decorated score card is venerated, the truth is that sometimes you just don't know who's really into you and who's not. Please, making assumptions is the worst thing you can do. Instead, ask pointed questions especially when you have a major flirt on your hands.

Do you like me as more than a friend? What are we doing here? Where do you think this is going? Are you ready for a relationship in this phase of your life? As simple as they sound, these are powerful questions. Their powers lie in their ability to help you detect a fraud. No matter how bold this man or woman is in their flirtations, if commitment is far from their intentions these questions will have an effect akin to the gangrene effect, except this time the limb isn't being cut off. It will fall off on its own.

These questions say that I am a serious man/woman. These questions say that I don't have time for your games. These questions say that I will have no part in your confusion. These questions say that I am seeking a man/woman who is emotionally aware and is decisive.

Too many times I've seen people get hurt because they assumed or because they were too afraid to hear the opposite of what they were hoping for. There is a saying where I'm from: 'When you assume, you are making an ass out of you and me.'

It is unwise to assume that because he took you out to a nice dinner that he likes you as more than a friend. It is disadvantageous to your emotional integrity to assume that because she smiled at you in a particular way that she really is feeling you. Don't be afraid either. There is great wisdom in settling for a small scrape in comparison to an open wound. Ask the questions, they will save you a world of hurt.

### ***Know the Motives Behind Your Actions***

Why are you doing what you're doing? Why are you cooking him breakfast? Why out of the 50 women in your phonebook are you calling her every single day to find out how her day was? Now don't get me wrong. These are beautiful and kind acts. They show care and concern. They don't necessarily mean that you want more than friendship. But I'm just curious, if you see him/her as nothing more than a friend. Why?

Almost 50% of the people reading this concluded that these acts were fueled by feelings that constitute more than friendship. Be honest. If you were a woman, you said, who is he kidding? He

wants this girl. If you were a man, you probably said, “Yeah, she wants him.” But that may not necessarily be the case. Some people really have no ulterior motives.

For example, I’m able to let down my barriers and be nice to a guy when I don’t feel like my singleness is being threatened (Yup, weird! I know. I’m working on it. Or does it need work? I’ll think about it). I’m generally difficult, hard and tough around someone of the opposite sex if I feel like he’s “rolling” on me. When I sense that he wants nothing more than friendship – because that’s really all that I’m willing or brave enough to give – the guard is down. I will cook for you; I will call you to check up on you, I’m ridiculously supportive and always willing to be your sounding board.

Now some men will misconstrue my lowered guard and conclude that I possibly have feelings of affection toward them and really and truly if they do, there’s nothing wrong with that. It’s possible that the factors which influenced their development say that certain behaviors and actions are tantamount to non-platonic feelings (I say this with no sarcasm at all). Knowing motives helps me to understand the issue at hand. Is it me, or is it them?

Knowing your motives will also help you to guard yourself. When you figure out the catalyst for your behavior, you can decide what your next step is. Wow, am I catching feelings for this guy? or am I just being friendly? Knowing your motives gives you the opportunity to set boundaries if there is a need to.

### ***Setting Boundaries***

When it comes to your interaction with those of the opposite sex there are some boundaries that you just know that you shouldn’t cross, there are some boundaries that you put in place based on the guidance of the people in your life and then there are some that you put in place based on your observations of your reactions or the reactions of other individuals. However the boundaries come about they are existent for a great purpose.

There are the GIVEN boundaries; no inappropriate touching, no lip kissing, etc, and then there are the developed boundaries. There are some brothers I will hug, and then there are those who I’ll wave from the other side of the room. There are some of my male friends that I refuse to have dinner with alone and it’s not because they’ll rape me or because I feel uncomfortable in their presence. It’s because I am aware of my reaction to them. If anything I feel too comfortable in their presence.

There were some friends that I could use endearments with and they wouldn’t think anything of it and

then there were those guys when “babe” or “sweetie” came out of my mouth their trend of thought is, “She wants me.” The reality is that everyone does not know how to communicate their need for particular boundaries.

Everyone is not at a place where they can say when you do these things I am inclined to believe these particular things. Some people will cut you off, others will say that you misled them and others will deal with it like a pro. For my sake and the sake of the former two examples, I decided that it was important for me to develop my personal boundaries.

So here they are: CHADIA’s PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

***One***

I don’t go to cozy one-on-one dinners with men.

***Two***

I refrain from the use of endearments.

### ***Three***

It is always the case that when you hear a man say that Chadia fed him, he was one in a group of people that I fed. It would take a couple of hours for me to explain that boundary to you all. So just take my word for it, that it is an important one (at least where I am concerned).

### ***Four***

I don't give gifts to the men who are not in my inner circle (the inner circle is few and they've all received gifts from me). It's a personal thing and certainly doesn't apply to everyone. Giving gifts is a big deal to me. I attach great meaning to gift giving and it's very possible that if you hear a man who isn't in my inner circle say that I spent my money on him or that I gave him a gift, that I'm dating him. As of now, no one has EVER heard such a thing.

### ***Five***

I watch how I give compliments. Again, it's a personal thing. I'm good with words and my delivery can sometimes make a man feel like there's a little more going on there, so I've learnt to temper how I give compliments and leave the lavish ones for the man who will hold my heart.

### ***Six***

I don't spend large amounts of time on the phone or chatting, and I don't speak to certain men past certain hours.

### ***Seven***

I have ceased all forms of flirting. I say what I mean and I mean what I say.

### ***Eight***

My friendships with my male counterparts are more often than not redefined when they enter relationships with women who are not me.

It's clear. As Christians there are some boundaries that we should never cross but there is also a relativity associated with boundaries. We may need to develop particular boundaries for certain people, certain situations or particular phases in our lives. Are these boundaries that I have, ever

modified? The answer is yes. While some of my personal boundaries are static, others are flexible and depending on how my relationship develops with certain people I adjust accordingly.

I know that along the way I've upset some people (particularly men) and in certain situations I felt almost bullied into being a little more open and having less boundaries and I paid the price for it. There are situations where I removed my boundaries and got hurt and so I learnt that everybody doesn't have to understand or agree with my boundaries. Sometimes, I'm simply doing what's best for me and sometimes I'm also doing what's best for us both.

It took some feelings getting hurt along the way to teach me the importance of laying on the sweetness when erecting my barriers (Yes ladies, you don't have to be a total witch when a brother comes up to you. He has feelings, and sometimes it took a whole lot of courage for him to walk up to you. You can KINDLY let him know of your lack of interest in his attentions). Despite these hurdles, I can say that boundaries have been a good servant to me.

My experience has taught me that there is a time for the removal of boundaries and it isn't always as soon as you meet someone. For the men in my life who were patient enough to wait for the removal of the lines and the crumbling of the walls, I'd like to think that they will say that it was well worth the wait.

At the end of the day, where boundaries are concerned just ensure that you are not hurting anyone. Boundaries are meant to protect from harm. They are not meant to cause harm. I must alert you that just like a barb wired fence, some of the boundaries you put in place may appear harmful but really act as a preservation of life by preventing access to things that can cause danger.

If you're not sure about the boundaries that you're setting, talk it over with a friend, youth leader, mentor, or accountability partner, figure out why you're setting up particular boundaries; discuss where you are in your life and why certain boundaries may be necessary at this particular stage. Add the wisdom of God to it, and you should be rocking and rolling.

At the end of the day, in as much as I've tried to share with you some of the lessons that I've learnt where "the guard" is concerned, I've come to realize that "the true guard" is a piece of artwork painted by the brush of wisdom. So, you may see certain areas in your life where the things which I have shared will become highly practical but you should also be aware that there are some experiences that you will have in which you will need to seek advice from leadership, friends and family and sometimes you will need to seek wisdom directly from the source of wisdom – God Himself.



## *The True Guard*

In as much as I've tried to share you with you some of the lessons that I've learnt where "the guard" is concerned, I've come to realize that "the true guard" is a piece of artwork painted by the brush of wisdom. So, you may see certain areas in your life where the things which I have shared will become highly practical but you should also be aware that there are some experiences that you will have in which you will need to seek advice from leadership, friends and family and sometimes you will need to seek wisdom directly from the source of wisdom – God himself.

For the sake of kindness, for the sake of the preservation of our statuses as demonstrators of love we must apply "the guard" in wisdom. Otherwise we may find ourselves shutting doors and opportunities that God has opened for us, or shunning husbands and wives that the Lord has placed before us. We may find ourselves unnecessarily hurting those who mean us no harm. We may find ourselves simply living ordinary and fearful lives.

In closing this chapter, I leave you with these words:

Gentlemen, to you I say, respect your sisters. Don't lead them on. Protect their hearts. You can take his girl. SO what? How does this add value to your life or character? Protect your brothers. Don't look at something that isn't yours. Ladies, to you I say, Respect your brothers. Don't lead them on. Protect your sisters. Don't break their hearts in the name of vain rivalry or revenge.

## #behindthescreen

Most people who meet me for the first time while I am in a social setting will swear on a Bible that I am an extrovert. I am frank, I am opinionated and almost always spearheading a boisterous debate or controversial discussion. Those who know me well know that what is seen in social circles is gravely deceptive of my true nature. I am immensely introverted and after these outings – the ones where new people conclude that I’m an extrovert – it takes me hours and sometimes days to recover.

In cognizance of these things, you can imagine that when I made my foray into the world of online dating, I sincerely thought that this was the best thing that the internet had ever been used for. Alright, I’m exaggerating a bit but I placed such great value on online dating that I would recommend it to all who would listen. This was the way to go. It was like man or woman shopping. You look at the tag, and if it doesn’t have the right size, you put it back on the rack.

But all jokes aside, I liked that it gave me an opportunity to bypass all the social stuff. Should I bat my eyelashes here? Is he going to pull out my chair? Are we going to talk about the difference between cheddar cheese and goat cheese the entire night? Y’all know about all these dating rules that just drive you crazy. Whatever happened to genuine friendship and deep conversation? I’m really not a fan of all the drama that boxes people into a category if they’re not sure which rules to adhere to from all the confusion spewed at them.

So first I tried Christian Mingle because home girl definitely wants a Christian man. Now, I’m not being judgmental or anything but some of the brothers that I met on there would not know what Christianity was even if it hit them in the face with a large print Bible. So for me, Christian Mingle was a fail. This is not to say that it won’t be successful for you or someone else. It just didn’t work for me.

Then, I tried a few not so well known ones, some interracial ones (I appreciate all colors of the rainbow) and I finally settled on OKCupid. I liked OKCupid best out of all the sites because of the questions. It let me know largely what I was getting myself into. I knew exactly what type of Christian man that I would be meeting.

There were men who had stated that they were serious Christians but were also open to having sex after 6 or more dates. Where I’m from the right option for a serious Christian would be “until after marriage”. But hey, at least they were honest. They had no problems with unzipping their pants before the wedding night.

In all fairness, there were those who did pick the right responses but they just looked “churched out”. Needless to say those who had selected the correct response were not appealing to me. So I, with my smart self decided that I should rationalize the options that were presented before me. I should make those men who had plainly stated who they were seem more attractive.

Why are you shaking your head? Hey, I don’t know these people. They didn’t say that they were not willing to wait “until marriage”. They simply said that they were open to doing the deed before the wedding night and in the new spirit of a university education I decided that I had to be more open. I was way too closed off. Foolish, foolish, foolish and I laugh at it now. It ranks high on my hilarity scale.

Anyhoo, I went along with my new philosophy on openness and what I got me was some bad brothers who were dangerous to my equilibrium. They were gorgeous, smooth, spiritual and all the stuff you’d read about in a good book. But as the responses to their questions foretold they didn’t really have the type of relationship with Christ that a man that I would be interested in dating would have.

They had an idea of God that wasn’t fully supported by what he says that he is in his word as opposed to a fear of God; and a man/woman with the idea of God can only lead or encourage in you in their idea of God as opposed to lead/encourage you in the knowledge and fear of the Lord. And that’s exactly where I was led.

Slack conversation was the order of the day for me; come to think of it, it had long been something that I ordered off the menu regularly but online dating provided me with something akin to a more easily accessible restaurant. I had read way too many romance novels because I was saying things that I had absolutely not a clue of firsthand knowledge of. That was it for me, but I know for many others that talking to multiple people at a time, nudes and sex dates were also selections off the menu.

So if it was that good what caused you to stop?

I liked online dating but there came a particular point where I decided that online dating was no longer for me. I had a particular experience that sobered me and caused me to really look at what I was getting myself into and how I sometimes sold myself short.

I sleep very little and so it appears that I’m always connected. I’m always signed into social media, my laptop is always on, I’ll answer an email at anytime and I just plain don’t sleep very often. Anyways, there was this one guy that I had met and he was really cool. Ummm... cool is the wrong word. The brother was the opposite of cool and he just wasn’t good for me. We had great conversation, he cracked me up, and he was a professional compliment giver (gave your girl some

competition in that department) but like I said he wasn't good for me.

I confess: I am horrible at keeping in touch so somewhere along the line our friendship fizzled out. We still spoke to each other but it wasn't that every night, what are you watching on Netflix type of conversation that we used to have. I started to observe something about the times that we did speak. The conversation was dirty and it was always at these hours where nothing good was going on. It was necessary for me to cut it off.

The moment that I said, "I know that in times past I encouraged these types of conversations with you and for that I am sorry. But right now, I've come into a place where I've made a commitment to God and to myself to conduct my relationships and conversations in a way that is pleasing to him, and I can no longer have these types of conversations with you," that was the end of whatever friendship we had and I was happy for it. But it also sobered me. I had sold myself short; disappointed in myself is an understatement.

So no online dating huh?

If you let me, I can make a compelling argument in favor of online dating but I would also be making a case for the need for advanced spiritual maturity. There is a Christian way to handle online dating. But, the truth is that most people are not a stage where they can handle it and online dating will send them into a serious case of cyber impurity.

### ***Social Media Sins***

It's the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Cyber impurity almost appears to be the norm. Some people don't have to go as far as online dating. Facebook does a remarkable job of connecting people and lately, a lot of men have been hitting me up on LinkedIn. Yes. I speak of the social network for professionals. In addition there is Whatsapp and Viber and Kik. The list of opportunities for us to jeopardize our purity behind the glass of a screen is almost never-ending.

It is real. No. You cannot handle it. When I think back, I can truthfully say that some of the most volatile and uncomfortable ovulation periods that I have ever had in my lifetime came about as a result of these inappropriate conversations behind the screen. I was fortunate. It stayed behind the screen but some people are not disciplined enough to take a cold shower. They will do what is necessary to come back into a space of comfort. I think we agree that this is just dangerous, y'all!

It's funny. Half of the time, the person behind the screen is not even who we really are. The bravery that some of us get behind the screen is astounding. We say and do things that we probably wouldn't have a fifth of the guts to say in person (I know I did). We say things that we have absolutely no intention of delivering on and we feel safe because he/she is 5000 miles away.

Let's not even begin to speak about the married men and women who take on the person of a disengaged human in cyber space. The topic of cyber impurity could really be a book in and of itself. So I'll cut it short here and just say to you, young lady and young man, what we do and say on the internet has great impact on our thoughts and what we think affects our emotions as well as our actions. Take stock of the things that you've shared, posted, as well as the conversations that you've had in cyberspace. How are these things directing your thoughts? How will they affect your life if they are bared for all to see?

## #whyonearthareyoustillavirgin?

What if you knew beforehand that when you got married sex would be painful for you? What if you knew beforehand that it would take you a few tries before you get the groove of things? Would you still decide to maintain your virginity? Would you still decide that purity is the journey for you?

I recently read, and it is very possible that you may have also read a blog post on [thoughtcatalog.com](http://thoughtcatalog.com) titled: "I Waited Until My Wedding Night to Lose My Virginity and I Wish I Hadn't." In this blog post the young woman lamented about the discomfort and shame she experienced when she engaged in intercourse for the first time. This, she states, caused her to regret her decision to maintain her virginity until marriage.

This is the crux of the matter: the untruths that we have used within the Body to encourage purity. It has now come back to bite us in our rear ends. Our Christian young men and women have been duped into waiting until marriage because they've been told that the sexual experience and sensation is more beautiful within the confines of marriage.

The church has even brought to the fore female advocates and motivators who say that they never experienced an orgasm before marriage. They've brought forth male advocates who say that they had not truly experienced sex and mind blowing orgasms until they experienced it with their wives.

Well that may be true. But it is also true that there are people who have phenomenal and fulfilling sexual experiences outside of the bounds of marriage. There are people who, with men and women who are not their husbands or their wives experience orgasms more regularly than married Christian couples.

The truth is that even if you wait, your sexual experience may be nothing like what you've seen in the movies, or the beautiful journey that other Christian couples may have experienced. It may be painful, it may take time to embrace the vulnerability that makes great sex. A number of issues may come up and it may just be plain horrible. Will you still wait? Why Wait?

I wait because I love God and I wish to honor His commandments. I wait, because I look beyond the physical and I understand the spiritual implications of not waiting. I wait because I believe that the primary and foremost basis for anything that we do as Christians should always be the glory, pleasure and honor of God and I believe that we need not magnify blessings or other things above God's glory, pleasure and honor.

This is why I wait. But why do you wait? Before you make your conclusion, perhaps a Biblical case for the power of waiting will help you make the decision that I hope you do make.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This week my spirit has been made to understand that I wasn't created to serve the law, but the law was made to serve me. This therefore means that God's rules are existent to help me live the victorious life that He desires for me, and not to hinder me or make me unhappy, and the same goes for anyone who is reading this book.

I am most certain that most young people would have encountered the words used here in a health class. I pray that even as I type this, that God would give me the wisdom and the right words to say to bring across the value of His request that we remain pure. I pray that lives will be changed and that the young men and women will choose to embark on a path of purity.

## **OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW TESTAMENT MEETS UP FOR:**

### *The Ladies*

When it comes to the subject of purity, a very popular or prominent verse is 1 Corinthians 6:9. It states that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. This verse is not in any way gender/sex biased but for the purpose of this explanation, we will restrict its relevance to the woman. This means that we will look at only the woman's body as a temple.

Now that this has been established, think about the temple in the Old Testament. There were rules and restrictions which governed the housing place of the presence of God, and there was a process which preceded entry into the Holy of Holies (the place of complete intimacy with God). Before entering the Holy of Holies, it was necessary for the priest to unveil a number of openings: the outer courts, the holy place, the brazen altar, etc.

By the time the priest arrived at the point of complete intimacy (Holy of Holies), he was naked and vulnerable. He had already done so much. He had unveiled all these other openings, he had risked his life several times because if there was any violation of rules and process it was equal to his death; but most of all, he was just plain grateful to be chosen for the privilege to meet with God on such a deep and intense level.

If you examine the process by which a woman establishes intimacy with a man, you will begin to see

parallels between what the priests had to endure and what a woman may require of a man before she fully allows him to unveil her. Most women require men who will reach them mentally, spiritually and emotionally. After he has unveiled all these parts then the woman may allow him to fully unveil her whereby he can reach a point of complete intimacy with her. This is the point where one may choose to engage in sexual intercourse.

In the Old Testament not just anyone could enter the Holy of Holies. A human being not ordained as priest would not be given the privilege of entering this inner sanctum and not just any human being could be ordained as priest. The priest had to come specifically from the lineage of Aaron (a particular spiritual lineage) and the priest had to meet certain dress and conduct requirements. In other words, the priest had to be clean or he would defile the temple.

I feel like a cave holding the value of content that could make me a billionaire has just been opened. It is tempting to explore the requirements that the priest had to meet and compare it to the requirements that a woman's mate would need to meet but I will restrict myself, keep it simple and say that in this case, the requirement that the priest has to meet is the requirement of being the woman's husband. If he is not then he will defile the temple.

This means that every non-priest allowed entry into the Holy of Holies is defiling the temple. Every man who is not your husband that you allow to get to that point of complete intimacy as achieved via sexual intercourse is defiling your body. You are doing him and yourself an injustice and just as it led to death in the Old Testament it will lead to death in some form in your life. It may not be a physical death, but it will lead to some form of death; emotional and certainly spiritual.

In short, allowing a man to engage in sexual intercourse with you means that you are allowing him to enter the Holy of Holies. Thinking of my body as a temple and viewing complete intimacy as akin to reaching the Holy of Holies gave my purity an extreme sense of worth because I have understood the extreme closeness and vulnerability which getting to that place requires.

I also understand the profound pleasure which it brings and if sex under the right conditions can be compared to, or even come close to the intimacy that I find in God's presence – the Holy of Holies – then I must conclude that it is absolutely phenomenal. I also understand that the person who is allowed to enter the Holy of Holies must be my priest for everything to fall into place.



## *The Priests: Gentlemen?*

I came across a Latin phrase often used by historians, “testis unus, testis nullus” meaning “one witness, no witness.” I like this phrase, not because of its validity in ascertaining the value of a historical source but because it gives credence to the understanding of the word testes as plural of testis and thus plural of the English word witness, thus witnesses.

“Witness to what?” you may ask.

Your testicles (testes), in the most basic or primal sense are witness to your virility as a man, but the testes also act as witnesses to the acts of the penis/phallus. They can sometimes be such telling witnesses that they will leave/give great evidence of the whereabouts of the penis. And by that, I mean that they are the origination of a man’s seed, and thus they can leave evidence in the form of a child. But let’s look at how this is interpreted in regards to your purity.

For the Christian man, we can agree that intercourse establishes priesthood of the temple. Every time a man engages in intercourse with a woman there is entry of the phallus (penis) into the vagina. For a Christian man, your testes have borne witness of entry into the temple. You are testifying that you are the priest and that you have the right to enter the Holy of Holies. You are emphatically stating that you have met the requirements to enter the temple. You are in essence bearing witness to being this woman’s husband.

Gentlemen, please do not allow your body to be false witnesses. Do not enter a temple if you are not qualified to do so. As noted above, if you do not meet the requirements for entering the Holy of Holies then you are in essence asking for death. It may not be death in its literal form but death in a spiritual form or death in an emotional form. Therefore, my brothers, I urge you to enter temples only where you are the priest, temples where you have the right to go, and temples that you are incapable of defiling (Yup, I sounded a little like Paul here but you catch my drift). You may only have sex with your WIFE.

I am hoping that if you think of your girlfriend’s body as the Holy of Holies, that place of complete intimacy, almost reverence, then you will be persuaded to wait until you have met your requirements. I am also hoping and praying that when you understand the consequences which defiling a temple holds that this understanding will also persuade you to wait.

## **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BLOOD**

When most women have sex for the first time, the hymen is broken. This is a vessel located somewhere at the opening of the vagina filled with blood. For some men, loss of their virginity also results in bleeding. Blood also continues to play a significant role in sexual intercourse post virginity. It is common knowledge that a man's erection is formed as a result of blood, but it isn't very well known that blood is what also stimulates the arousal of a woman<sup>[1]</sup>. This is very significant because in the Old Testament anytime blood was shed it was symbolic of the ink which seals a contract.

Blood was also used during a priest's ordination. In the Old Testament, the ordination of a priest would include the sprinkling of blood on the garment of the priest. I see this as also very significant to the understanding of the covering of blood upon the man's penis when he engages in intercourse with a woman who is a virgin. This is why the first time one has sex it should be with their wife or their husband. It is akin to the sealing of a contract. It is the establishment of specific spiritual roles. For a Christian, the terms and agreements of a sexual contract should always be as follows: WIFE and HUSBAND.

## **CLOSING**

I hope that this clarifies why sex before marriage is not something that should be taken lightly. It's not as simple as deciding on whether or not you're going to have a fantastic honeymoon. First, and most importantly your decision to wait is pleasing to God but it is also important to remember that there are physical and spiritual implications.

Having said this, there are young men and women who will read this post and who will feel like they have already violated the terms and agreements of sexual purity, those who feel that their temples have been defiled and those who feel that they have defiled temples. To you, I say that all hope is not lost. God is the God of restoration. These temples can be cleaned out and you can be restored to a point of sexual purity. All you have to do is to dedicate your body to God, make the commitment and He will honor it.

**Note:** I deal with the topic of restoration more closely in Chapter 8.

# #thegodcalledme

*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*

*-Revelation 4:11 (King James Bible)*

Someone once told me that masturbation was her way of maintaining her reinstated purity.

What??

Alright, alright, alright! (\*hands in the air\*) Some of you see nothing wrong with what she said, and that's alright; at least until the end of this chapter. And perhaps, I'm in a minority but I was shocked. Still, I recognize that many young people in the church hold a very similar view. It is a view that should have no place in the imaginations of the royal priesthood and needs to be demolished with utmost haste.

Masturbation is one of the biggest lies fed to young men and women both in the world and in the church. Psychologists say that it is a perfectly healthy means of sexual exploration and some say that it is really the only way that they can maintain purity. However, I believe that these are both untruths. There is nothing healthy about masturbation and masturbation is in actuality a violation of the laws of purity.

In the introduction of this book I made reference to the purpose of the laws of purity, the primary one being a guarding of the sacredness of the communion that we as human beings share with God. God is a holy God and only flocks with birds of the same feather. To enter His presence, we in turn must be holy. So how does masturbation affect this communion? Does God have a problem with human beings enjoying pleasure?

## ***masturbation***

*the stimulation or manipulation of one's own genitals, especially to orgasm; sexual self-gratification*

*-dictionary.reference.com*

Let's leave the first question for later. But where the latter is concerned, God does not have a problem with human beings enjoying pleasure. However, He has put in place laws that govern our receipt of

pleasure. These laws ensure that we do not violate the law of purpose: His pleasure (Revelation 4:11). This is why where a human's derivation of sexual pleasure is concerned, God is pleased only with sexual intercourse and sexual pleasure by His design and within the bounds of marriage.

Sexual intercourse within the bounds of marriage mimics the type of relationship and communion that is most pleasing to God; the communion that human beings should share with Him. Sexual intercourse by God's design is characterized by a one on one, exclusive relationship between two people of the opposite sex (a communion of two entities that are not the same; in reference to our relationship with Him, a God and a human being)[2], and the attainment of pleasure through giving another pleasure and receiving pleasure from another.

Masturbation violates that construct. Masturbation gives pleasure to no one but self. There is no communion with anyone but self, and ME becomes the god of the life of those who engage in masturbatory acts. We give unto ourselves what we were designed to give to God and by His design, a spouse – pleasure – and we become as gods unto ourselves.

## **THE CONSEQUENCES OF MASTURBATION**

### ***We open doors to greater sexual sin***

There is a law of economics called the law of diminishing marginal utility. In lay man's terms it states that as an individual begins to consume more and more of a particular product that the utility or pleasure they derive from the use of each additional unit of that product decreases until there is no more pleasure to be derived.

This principle can be applied to masturbation. With every act of masturbation an individual's pleasure intake from the act begins to decrease until it reaches nothing. Most individuals who begin with masturbation say that they eventually graduate to outright fornication. Some of them use pornography to help get them aroused and to achieve their desired level of pleasure, and just like a career we begin to see a branching out, except this time it is into the field of sexual sin.

*<sup>25</sup>They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen. <sup>26</sup> That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. <sup>27</sup> And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other.*

*Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved.*

*-Romans 1:24-27 (NLT)*

### ***We open doors to homosexuality***

Remember, masturbation violates the construct of what is pleasing to God. View it in this way also: God desires for us to gain our greatest pleasure by communing with Him while He gains His greatest pleasure when His creation communes with Him. These elements cannot be seen in the act of masturbation. However, we do see some of the elements that constitute homosexuality.

First, there is no relationship with another. It is a relationship with the self. The self or “me” becomes an idol, and the pleasure that God has designed for Him or to be given to another within the bounds of marriage is now given to “me”.

Second, the self is a like entity. If you are a woman the self is a woman. If you are a man, the self is a man. And so you find that those who practice masturbation have invested time in learning to please something or someone like “me”. Thus, the doors to pleasing a like entity have been opened.

### ***Selfishness***

The philosophy of selfishness is one that is central to the practice of masturbation. There is no receipt of pleasure from another nor is there the giving of pleasure to another. It is all about self-pleasure and self-gratification. As a matter of fact, one of the benefits of masturbation cited by psychologists and sex experts is that it allows you to design pleasure to your specification. You determine exactly what you want and when you want it. It’s all about you.

### **PRAYER**

*Dear Lord, I pray that you help me to rid myself of myself. Empty me Lord and fill me with you. Teach me how to express love for you and others over love and pleasure for myself. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

## **CHALLENGE: IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU**

Masturbation is a practice that finds its core in selfishness. It is rooted in self pleasure. This 7-day challenge won't help you get rid of every ounce of selfishness in your life but it will certainly help you in diverting some of your attention away from yourself to the pleasure of others. So these are the instructions:

Everyday for the next 7 days, pick at least one person to perform a random act of kindness for. Help an old lady cross the street, spend an extra 15 minutes playing with your little brother or sister, give your mom a day off, cook for your grandma or play a game of checkers with grandpa. This is also an awesome opportunity to use what you've learnt about love languages to bring some joy into the lives of the people around you.

I'd love to hear your feedback on this challenge.

## #intimacyconstruct

Back in the day I loved me some cream in my coffee. I absolutely loved the mixed race brothers. Something about the color of their skin, for some, their unusual eye color and for others the texture of their hair just appealed to this sister. But I am delivered, y'all. These days the Lord has blessed me with an appreciation for pretty much every skin tone, eye color, and very often I'm willing to take my coffee black and strong ( A big shout out to my Trini brothers. The Lord used you all to deliver this sister just as he used Moses to deliver Israel from the hands of Pharoah).

But again –as I so often have the tendency to do – I digress.

Anyhoo, I entered the sixth form with the aforementioned bias and it was a good place to have such a bias because at that school I would encounter more “shabin” (how we refer to those who are mixed race or creole) men than I had ever encountered in my short sixteen year old life. First week on campus, you know that homegirl is scouting and I didn't have to scout very long. There he was! Gorgeous skin, the fiercest eyes, (and I don't mean fierce in Tyra Banks lingo. I mean FIERCE.), that bone structure, and he had a decent looking body to boot.

“Yup. He was the one!” was the thought of many young women across the campus. But at the end of the day it was just wishful thinking. We had no chance with him. The brother, just wasn't interested.

If you're a 90s baby or even an 80s baby – come to think of it you just have to be alive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – it's very possible that you have a personal relationship with someone who is openly homosexual. Certain cultures and upbringing are more open about the lifestyle of homosexuality, but coming from a Caribbean, sheltered and seemingly homophobic background, I really didn't come into a knowledge and realization that homosexuality really did exist until my encounter with this fine shabin brother that I, or any woman didn't have a chance with.

I can't say that coming into exposure of homosexuality and having homosexual friends was a bad thing for me. Most of my friends who are homosexual are some of the sweetest guys that I know. It allowed me to come into a place where I began to understand and was able to better manage the dichotomy between loving a person and hating the sin. I've also found that it is easier to speak against homosexuality when you don't have friends or people in your life who are homosexual.

Still, I don't shut up about it. I believe that homosexuality, just like lying and fornication is displeasing to God and I believe that it violates His design and order of things. Because of all the debate on the issue, the prominent Christian figures who are coming to the fore and justifying their

lifestyle choices, and the church's refusal to publicly stand firm on the issue, I believe that now more than ever young people, old people, people in general need to know that homosexuality is displeasing to God and most importantly for our generation, that it is a violation of the laws of purity.

In the face of my stance, I like to remain sympathetic towards those who have fallen to the temptation of homosexuality. I believe that they are people who should experience the same love and compassion that we show to the fornicator, liar and adulterer and sometimes I do feel that the church has failed to manage and teach us to manage well the division between the sin and the sinner. I think sometimes we forget that homosexuals, just as all other sinners have had experiences and exposures that have shaped their inclinations.

Some of the struggles that people endure with sexuality are the fruits of sexual abuse. For others, it is the fruit of adherence to philosophies that are not in keeping with the Word of God. Some experimented and just as others do with drugs and alcohol and got hooked. Whatever the case, I believe that it is important that we embrace homosexuals in the Body for reformation purposes. Loving the sinner and hating the sin is the way Jesus reached everyone He came into contact with. Just as there is rehabilitation and repentance for the liar or adulterer, there is rehabilitation and repentance for the homosexual or bisexual.

## **THE INTIMACY CONSTRUCT**

Similar to masturbation, homosexuality is a sexual practice that violates the construct/pattern of intimacy set by God. This construct is especially important to God because it is a replica of His desired relationship with His greatest creation: human beings. Out of all creation, human beings were the only ones given the privilege of being made in the image and likeness of God; a product of the very breath of God and this exclusivity is essential to the understanding of why God is displeased with homosexuality.

*<sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*

*~Genesis 1:27(KJV)*

In Genesis 1:27 we learn that God created both male and female in His image and likeness. Thus, we know that both male and female were created by God and for His pleasure (Revelation 4:11). But we also note that there is an expunction on the creation of woman in Chapter 2 from verse 21 to verse 23. We learnt that she was taken from man; in the name of specification, from his rib. In 1 Corinthians 11 (even though it was written to bring illumination on the rules of worship for the Corinthian church), a



similar pattern is made clear. Paul emphatically states that man is God's glory and woman was made for man.

In both these portions of Scripture we glean that that which was created for intimacy with and for the pleasure of another was taken from that which it was created to please. Man came into being from the breath of God (Genesis 2:7) and was created to please God, while woman was taken from the rib of man and was created to please man. I call this the intimacy construct.

This is the divine order of things and any union which must meet the approval of God must follow this construct. Homosexual unions or homosexual intimacy violates this construct. Man did not play any role in the production of man, neither was woman taken from woman. We can therefore conclude that the only form of intimacy approved by God is that between Him and man, and that between man and woman.

### *Now what?*

If you're reading this book and you struggle with your sexuality for whatever reasons, and you want to cross that hump, it is not a lost cause. You'd have to put in place certain structures and you'd have to be willing to put in the work. But overcoming issues with sexuality is not an impossible task.

If you're interested be sure to drill into your psyche that this is not going to be a walk in the park; nothing about purity or Christianity is. If you're not interested, now would be a good time to flip to the next chapter.

If you're now reading this line you're interested in overcoming the issues that you may have with your sexuality or you're just curious to see what I have to say on the subject. Whatever the case is, you're here. So let's make it happen. I have a few steps for you to consider. They are few but powerful and they are desirous of time and effort.

### *Admittance of the Struggle*

On the basis that you are in agreement that homosexual desires and homosexual acts are not in alignment with the design and desires of God, and that they are a violation of the laws of purity, the first step really entails coming into admission of the struggle. Especially in church, this could possibly be the most difficult part of the process. But it can be done.

My advice is to find a pastor, church leader or Christian counselor that you feel comfortable with and believe that you can trust with that knowledge. A trusted friend, if not trained or experienced with such matters may not necessarily be able to help you deal with the issue. I also made specific reference to a Christian counselor because one who is not may simply encourage you to embrace your sexuality as is.

### ***Dig Deep***

I would recommend digging deep as the next step in the recovery process. This would require openness to discovering the things which have skewed your sexuality in the direction contrary to what God has ordered. Were you sexually abused as a child? Were you raped? Did someone of the opposite sex wound you emotionally? Were you experimenting and got caught up? Are you holding on to philosophies, ideas and principles that are not in keeping with the Word of God?

I highly recommend you seek the assistance of a church leader, pastor or Christian counselor especially during this part of the process. A trained and experienced ear may help you pinpoint and attach meaning to things that are symbolic and valuable to the discovery and healing process.

### ***Honing New Mindsets***

When you admit that homosexual desires and practices are not in keeping with the desire of God you have opened the door to honing new mindsets about sex and sexuality. You also open doors to honing new mindsets about sex and sexuality when you come into discovery of the things which influence or trigger particular thought patterns and behaviors.

This then allows you to put in place structures to deal with or counteract the things which you have discovered. But perhaps the most important part of honing new mindsets is found in the renewal of your mind through the Word of God – The Bible. Find out what God is saying, what He wants from you and what He desires for your life and put it into practice in your life.

Again, I stress the importance of seeking the assistance of a church leader, pastor or Christian counselor. A trained and experienced eye will be able to help you design structures to counteract triggers and encourage you in the Word.

## ***Accountability***

Accountability is an important part of the purity walk whether you're simply trying to maintain your virginity, stop watching porn or overcoming issues with sexuality. You may have noticed that I placed emphasis on seeking the assistance of a church leader, pastor or Christian counselor. During this journey it is important to have a sounding board; it is important to have someone who will show you the signs, and routes to your direction.

In this case, I recommend a professional such as the church leader, pastor or Christian counselor as the person whom you are accountable to. Issues with sexuality are immensely sensitive and as a result it is important – it is a must – to have someone who is trained, experienced and confidential to help you walk this part of the purity journey.

Am I saying don't lean on friends for support? Absolutely not! I am simply saying that make sure that someone who is qualified and skilled in this area is also in the mix.

## ***What if I tried but can't?***

Get that thought out of your mind immediately. You absolutely can. But be mindful that you will only attain the highest level of success with the strength of Christ. Sometimes we try to break habits or live holy solely out of the strength of our wills. Willpower is good but you only attain the highest pinnacle of success in spiritual living when you apply the strength of God to your will.

*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might*

*-Ephesians 6:10 (NKJV)*

This means spending time in the Word, spending time in prayer getting to know Him and the things which will cause Him to exert His strength on your behalf. This also means surrounding yourself with people who will encourage you in hymns, psalms and the Word. The environment or soil that you plant yourself in will determine how well you grow.

## *What if I relapse?*

It is not uncommon that when coming out of a habit or behavior that has been deeply embedded into our psyches that we relapse. If you do relapse, get up, dust yourself off, be sure to take note of the thing which caused you to stumble, take it out of your way and keep walking.

The key to not relapsing is the daily killing of flesh. I've noticed that when trying to break a habit, relapses occur when one moves into a place of unconsciousness. It then becomes important, as aspirators of holiness to pay close attention to Paul's warning to be sober and vigilant.

Daily killing flesh forces you to daily come face to face with the desires of your heart and to daily make a conscious decision to not walk in the steps not ordered by God. Daily killing flesh is something that can only be attained in a state of spiritual sobriety; in a state of consciousness and it is the key to not falling back into a sinful state.

## **PRAYER**

*Dear Lord, I ask that you cleanse my mind and affections. If for some reason I have drifted into a domain which is displeasing to you or contrary to the intimacy construct you have laid down I pray now that you will give me the strength to overcome and re-align my desires and behavior to your will. In Jesus' name,*

*Amen*

# #theartofwhoremongering

*Pornography, a combination of two Greek words, pornos and graphia: “Pornos” meaning whoremonger, and “Graphia, meaning art. Thus this renders the true meaning of the word pornography the Art of Whore Mongering.*

If you asked me what the most devastating disturbance to the maintenance of sexual purity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is, my response would be pornography. Young men and women have been duped into believing that it is a rite of passage while some believe that it is integral to an education on sexual intercourse. We live in such a sex infused society that sometimes pornography is right in front of us and we do not recognize what it is.

This is my experience with pornography:

*A year and a half ago if you had asked me if I had ever consciously looked at pornographic material, I would have told you an emphatic NO, and it would have been the truth. But one fateful night the mix of a dangerous cocktail of aloneness, idleness, “slack” conversation and my unrelenting curiosity put me in to a stupor that saw me venturing into unknown and dangerous territory.*

*I say unknown, because I knew what it was but I didn't really KNOW what it was. As a young person going to church, I had heard and understood the dangers of watching, but in my mind it wasn't really relevant to me. I had this under control. I wasn't going to watch for the enjoyment, I was going on an educational adventure.*

*I had just had a conversation where in my eyes I was a bit of a lightweight and so I was seeking to shift weight classes. I was going to become a heavy weight. Big Mistake! I should have just stuck to the scientific reading. Come to think of it, it was much like the temptation presented to Eve in the Garden. It was forbidden, but my desire to possess more knowledge superseded the knowledge that I already possessed – of the possible consequences – to the point, where just for a brief moment, the consequences became irrelevant.*

*It took me two months, and hours of watching to successfully shift my weight class. The images scarred me, my notion and understanding of what God created sexual intercourse to be and what I had envisioned it would be. My thirst for knowledge lured me into his trap, but God turned this experience around for my good and used it to teach me a few things.*

*For one, it taught me that I wasn't invincible, and two, it gave me an understanding of how to address the issue. The truth is that I wasn't really enjoying what I saw on the screen of my laptop. Women were often put into positions of inferiority, there was*

*absolutely NO intimacy, I was disgusted and after the first few vids, I decided that if this is what sex is all about, I could definitely wait until I was married. But, I continued watching anyway.*

*During my two months of watching, I had not neglected reading my Bible and doing research. But if I said that my watching was controlled, I would be telling a big lie. I had made a decision never to watch on Saturday nights because I played in church on Sunday mornings. I vividly remember calling in sick one morning, because I had watched on a Saturday night, and felt too unclean to even enter a church, far less walk up unto an altar and touch a keyboard to usher the people of God into worship.*

*Anyhow, one morning I opened my Strong's Concordance to look for something specific, but as soon as I opened up the Concordance, right there on the page, no flipping, no browsing, the word " pornos " stood out on the pages. And then I had this guilt. And I'm like oh shucks, Chadia. Busted! You know that you shouldn't have been watching these videos: educational motivations or not.*

*And then, there was my curiosity again. So I looked at the word, and I read everything that pertained to its English translation but the translation that stood out to me was "whoremonger". I was like Whoa! Is this one of the origins of the word pornography? I went online and googled and there it was: Pornography, a combination of two Greek words, pornos and graphia.*

*"Pornos" meaning whoremonger, and "Graphia, meaning art. Thus, rendering the true meaning of the word pornography the Art of Whore Mongering. Wait! Hold Up! They actually consider this nonsense an art? And then God gave me the scolding that I knew that I deserved. Chadia, every time you click on one of these videos, this is what you are supporting. This is what you are feeding your spirit: whore mongering.*

*We throw around the word pornography like it's a normal part of the 21st century. Some couples even feel that it is fine to watch it together, and some of my male friends speak as if the viewing of pornographic material is a natural rite of passage. Sorry to burst you all's bubble, but it shouldn't be normal, couples shouldn't watch it together, and despite what has been said, it is not a natural rite of passage for a young man or a young woman.*

*I was disgusted with myself to say the least. I also understood certain things about myself. Not to be boastful, but I know and understand that I have mental fortitude well beyond my years, and y'all it was a struggle to wean myself off this nonsense. It took me about 5 months and a few relapses (2 or 3, maybe more; I just thank God that I'm no longer there) to successfully never open my Google page and intentionally search for pornographic material, and I know that because of my mental fortitude, my battle was easy compared to what others out there go through."*

## ***Romance Novels: The Written Porn***

It is often believed that men have greater exposure to pornographic material as compared to women, but it's possible that women have a greater interaction with pornography than men for the sole reason that they read romance novels.

A few months after I wrote the above piece about my experience with pornography, I went into the Kindle Store to purchase a romance novel. I had long stopped reading them as often as I did, but every now and then, when I had enough time, I picked up a romance novel. On that day, I had time.

Anyways, I curled into my pillow with my iPad in hand. It was just one of those days. If I had never had the experience with watching pornography I probably would have read several novels that day. Anyhoo, I reached midway into the book. This was normally my favorite part. Finally these two idiots who had been tiptoeing around each other and were using even the existence of the sky as an opportunity to fight with each other, were about to come to their senses. Sparks were about to fly. Yay!

I read the first two paragraphs and then I stopped. What on earth was I reading? I had conjured up a visual representation for every word. "The" had a visual representation. Okay, I'm exaggerating but I am simply trying to bring forth the power of the written word. When you read, it's not just a cerebral thing; it's not just about the words on the pages. It is about the directions that the words give. It is about the places that the words take your mind. When you read romance novels, the words on the page direct your mind into a place called the conjuration of pornographic settings and scenes.

I also find that romance novels tend to taint for young women the idea of what a relationship between a man and a woman is supposed to be. Romance novels seem to suggest to its readers that if love is not done in a particular way then it is not love. If he doesn't pursue in a particular way, then he's not worthy of your time; if he doesn't do things in a particular way, he probably isn't worth your time but don't base it on what you've read from a romance novel.

When I think of it, romance novels are largely responsible for the mind games and the word games that I became so adept at playing, and I know that I'm not the only one who has fallen prey. I know of young women who have ruined what could have been solid relationships because there was no drama or there wasn't enough sexual tension. They say nonsense like, "He's too nice," or "We never argue." Girl, are you crazy? Sister, please come to your senses. You certainly don't want to be arguing for the

next 20 or 30 years of your life.

### ***The Auditory Porn: The Music***

From the very first time that I put in my dad's "Love Songs From the Movies" CD into the CD drive of our PC and heard "End of the Road" by Boyz II Men, I fell in love with love songs. I had liked a boy who didn't like me back or he expressed his like as 11 year old boys do and I felt like the song so adequately expressed the inner tug of war that I was experiencing even though I was only 11 years old. I love you, I know that I gotta let you go but you will forever have a place in my heart. I typed this and I laughed. I know now that I knew not a thing about love, but this is really how I felt at the time. But, I digress.

My love affair with love songs would further be cemented when I received a copy of Mariah Carey's hit single "Always Be My Baby" along with a Panasonic MP3/CD player as a gift while I was on vacation in London. I sang that song so much that I think that my sister almost hated it by the time we got home. This was only the beginning. I was about to fall even deeper in love, and I was about to be introduced to the various facets, sides and qualities of my new love.

When I arrived back home from vacation, I noticed that my cousin had an mp3 CD and I decided to take a listen. He was a bit of a ladies' man so I assume that this was his "get girls to allow me to cop a feel" compilation. Anyways, I popped the CD into my then, most prized possession, I put the headphones into my ears and I pressed play. "Close your eyes. Make a wish" were the first words that I heard from Boyz II Men's "I'll Make Love to You." I was a goner. I was absolutely smitten. I was never turning back.

I loved everything about love songs. I loved the ones that attempted to describe what falling in love felt like. I loved the ones that so adequately expressed the sting of heartbreak that you literally feel the cracks being etched on your heart as you listened and I had a deep love for the "bedroom music" even if I had no real or solid knowledge of sex and all that it entailed. I loved music but the music that I loved was beginning to mess with my purity game.

As I began to grow in maturity in my spiritual walk I started to take note of how music affected me. I had such intense reactions to it and it altered my vibes in such profound ways. Music aroused passions in me, it made me sad, it put me in a state of heartbreak when I was as single as a dollar bill and it's very possible that listening to Toni Braxton almost made me a feminist. Music wreaked havoc on my emotions and my psyche.



I became what I listened to. I remember when I first got introduced to Marvin Gaye's "Sexual Healing." Man, I wore that song out and sang it with such great expression that all the girls in my crew were convinced that I was sexually active even though I had NEVER even kissed a boy. This music was having an adverse effect on my standing in Christ Jesus. I had to get rid of some of the tracks on my deck.

Just as I did, you may have to make the decision to stop listening to certain types of music in order to achieve some of the feats that you would desire to achieve in your purity walk. When I started off, Tyrese and R.Kelly were the first on my deck to go. It was ridiculously painful, but I eventually let go of my girl, Toni as well and slowly but surely I started to wean off the music that I felt was not altering my vibes in the direction that I felt it should be going.

To my brothers, please do not be sending us YouTube links to "I'll Make Love To You." What? Are we about to be married the next day? And yes, I know about that move in the playbook. If you ask me, I'll say that it is whack but some of my sisters do like a man who has great taste in music and it works. My point is that you really shouldn't be giving a woman who has NO license the key to your Ferrari. It's possible that she's going to wreck it and wreck herself in the process.

To my sisters, the same goes out to you. Please, do not send the brother a YouTube link to "Signs of Love Making." This does not concern you. You're not supposed to be into horoscopes anyway. And please, none of that birthday sex and trust me when I say that the neighbors absolutely do not need to know your name. They may call the cops for domestic disturbance.

Please, I beg, do not get me wrong. There is nothing wrong with sharing a love for great music. But, I believe that we must be mindful of the motives behind our actions when doing so, and we must also be mindful of how we affect those with whom we are sharing our love of "great music" with. What are the circumstances surrounding the interaction? It's certainly something to think about.

## **PRAYER**

*Dear Lord, cover my points of entry. Seal my eyes and ears to anything that does not build me up or is of no profit to my life. I pray that you keep my eyes and ears solely for your purpose as I seek knowledge and wisdom on anything sexual. Give me the capacity to guard my eyes, ears and mind. In Jesus' name,*

*Amen.*

## **CHALLENGE: GO TO REHAB**

I spoke about a dangerous cocktail in my introductory paragraph, and it is of great importance. These were the elements that created the perfect environment to encourage me to watch. Every time I relapsed, it was because one or more of these elements were once again present and I had not put in place the right tools to deal with them. So here are a few things that I picked up along the way that could help you if you're up to taking this challenge:

### ***One***

Find out why you watch, read or listen.

### ***Two***

Put in place mechanisms to deal with the elements. For example, if one of the elements is idleness, pick up a new hobby of great interest and zone in on it during periods of idleness.

*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

*-Phillipians 4:8 (KJV)*

### ***Three***

Last, but most important: Continue to renew your mind by staying in the Word, learning the things that God deems good and acceptable. If it truly is your desire to please Him, you'll find that doing the things that displease Him and please your flesh will become less of an attraction to you. One of my favorite verses during this period was Philippians 4:8.

And seriously, if you've never watched, don't watch! I plead with you, don't start now! I, and countless others have figured out the consequences for you.

*You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is*

*crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and become its master.*

*-Genesis 4:7 (NLT)*

## **CHALLENGE: ROMANCE NOVEL BONFIRE**

If you've read anything by Eric Jerome Dickey or you have Fifty Shades of Grey in your possession, this challenge is certainly for you.

I clearly remember when my sister and I decided that we were no longer going to read romance novels. We decided that we were going to get rid of the hundreds of dollars worth of books on our bookshelf. Our initial thought was to give them away to someone who wanted them or to a library. But then we opted against it. Our reasoning was that we knew that the content was not edifying and that we shouldn't participate in its proliferation. Our next option was Romance Novel Bonfire!

Now some people may not necessarily like this idea. You may believe that it isn't eco-friendly or that it is not suited to your geographical location and these are valid concerns. The key is to get rid of the written porn without proliferation. Whatever way you choose to do so, have fun!

## #deepapologies

A few years ago, I attended a Christian camp as a camp counselor. Most Christian camps have a session on sex and sexuality where young men and women are taught what God expects where sex and sexuality are concerned and this camp was no different.

At this particular camp the young men and women were separated for this session; not for the purpose of keeping matters veiled but for the purpose of encouraging a level of openness which perhaps would not have happened if both sexes were in the same room at the same time. That day changed my life. I became aware that I formed part of a minority and it wasn't because of the color of my skin; it was because I had never been sexually molested as a child.

Campers and camp counselors alike had experienced one or more than one traumatic experience where a family member, a friend, or someone in authority whom they trusted had violated their trust and defied their duties to protect that child. My sister, my cousin and myself were stunned to say the least, and then the tears came down. I couldn't contain it. I couldn't believe it.

The church has great difficulty with keeping it real where the topic of molestation is concerned. No one wants to believe that the people who sit in the pews were touched inappropriately or forced into sexual acts by their parents, family members, family friends or worst yet, a deacon or a pastor. The issue is not addressed because these things don't happen to people who go to church.

The truth is that these things happen both to church people and people who do not go to church. Some come to the church to find healing, while others have these traumatic experiences while they are in church and find it difficult to see the church as a place of healing.

There are young men and women who sit in the pews; they religiously attend church events and functions but are hurting. There are those who appear sexually promiscuous and adventurous for no reason, some cannot come into a place of emotional integrity, some struggle with pornography, some with their sexuality and they are laden with the burdens of guilt and shame. The reason is devastating. Their purity was ripped from them.

Is it right to tell people who have had such traumatic experiences that through no fault of theirs they are no longer pure? Is it right to tell those who have experienced sexual molestation, that yes, their traumatic experience is indeed a violation of the laws of purity? Is it even right to explain to them that purity is necessary to commune with a Holy God? What God? Didn't he allow this to happen to me? Why would I choose to spend time with him or to worship him?

While all these questions are valuable to the discourse on purity – especially to those who have experienced the trauma of sexual abuse – I really just want to express my deepest apologies to you for the pain and trauma that you have endured. I really just wish to tell you that I am sorry that a depraved mind ripped you off from the opportunity to give the gift that was yours to give. If you're reading this, and you've been molested, I give you my deepest apologies and a hug in the spirit.

I really do sympathize with you and I'm hoping that the information in the remainder of this chapter will allow you to view what has happened from the mind and perspective of God. He never wanted this for you. This wasn't a part of His plan and His purpose for your life, and even though your experience is a product of the sin of man He has provided you with an avenue to heal and to come back into a place of wholeness and restoration through the death of His son and through the application of the principles in His Word.

Now, to the difficult part: the answers to the questions:

***Is sexual abuse a violation of the laws of purity?***

Sadly, the answer to this question is yes. If you've been molested or know someone who has been sexually abused then you may be aware of the guilt, shame and dirtiness that victims of sexual abuse say that they experience.

Despite the involuntary nature of sexual abuse the body is still being used in a way that violates the laws which God put in place e.g. laws against incest, fornication (sexual intercourse with a man/woman who is not your spouse), and this accounts for the guilt, shame and dirtiness that most victims of sexual abuse experience.

***Did God allow you to be sexually abused? Is He the cause of sexual abuse?***

The answer to that question is no. As a matter of fact, God created laws that forbid such practices. He forbids incest and rape. Sexual molestation is really a product of the sinful nature of man.

Look at it this way. God forbids lying. However, people still lie and when they lie there are consequences to their lies. This is not to compare lying or the consequences of lying to the trauma that you have experienced, but to bring forth the principle that acts of sin are not caused or influenced by God, but rather, they are caused by the disobedience of man to the laws of God.

## ***Now what?***

Before I say anything, I want to first say that I am by no means an expert on the topic of sexual abuse. I do not have a firsthand experience with sexual abuse. However, I speak to young people who've had to deal with sexual abuse and they share with me the pain of having been violated and the various ways in which some of their experiences have negatively impacted their lives. I know that it can never compare to having had the experience, but I am hoping that it does count for something. So off we go...

## ***It Happened***

If you can come, or have come into a place where you can admit that you have been sexually abused, this is a start. Some people are not quite there yet, and at this point it may be important for you to speak to a therapist, counselor, pastor or someone you trust. For some inexplicable reason, sharing it with someone makes it real, and where there is realness there is room to enter into a place of healing.

## ***Take Stock***

Taking stock really helps you to understand what happened. Who did it? When did it happen? How has it affected your life? How has it affected your relationships? The difficult nature of these questions suggests that you need a professional to help you get through this part and it has suggested well.

I beg you to not go through this part of the process alone. I believe in self-healing and self-deliverance but I don't think that this is one of the instances where it would be wise to practice it. I believe that speaking to a professional would save you time, energy and unnecessary detours.

## ***Forgiveness***

From speaking to people who have embraced the recovery from sexual abuse, I've gleaned that this is the most important, yet most difficult part of the process – Forgiveness. I can only imagine how difficult it is. I have experienced nothing as traumatic as this, yet forgiveness is a difficult thing for me. I also know that unforgiveness is a dangerous disease. It will eat you from the inside out.

Forgiveness will manifest itself in depression, loneliness and even physically as ulcers. It will rob you of healthy relationships and it will joyfully rob you of the experience of living the extraordinary life that God has designed for you.

Some people may need to forgive themselves and most poignantly most of the people who are reading this and have experienced sexual abuse will need to come into a place where they are able to forgive their abusers. For those who fall into the former category, I say to you that there is really nothing that you could have done to warrant a sexual violation. Please, don't blame yourself and forgive yourself.

Many people find themselves in the latter category – there is a need to forgive the abuser. Most people who are ready to commit to this part of the process handle this part with the help of a professional. What do you need to be able to come into a place of forgiveness? A professional will be able to help you set realistic expectations while working through the ones that are not so attainable such as, “I want him/her dead.”

### ***Honing New Mindsets***

This is the point where you make a conscious decision to hone new mindsets about acceptable and unacceptable behavior, men, women, relationships, sex and intimacy. How does God expect it to work? What was His perfect plan for you? You can find the answers to your questions in the Word of God. You can also find help in restructuring your thought patterns through fellowship. Go to youth group or the ministry that you feel most suits you and let iron sharpen iron.

I also recommend the input of a professional in this part of the process. He/she will be able to help you put in place the CORRECT structures to manage or cope with what has happened and to more fully embrace the healing process.

### **PRAYER**

*Dear Lord, forgive those who have sexually violated your children. I pray that you give all victims of sexual abuse the fortitude to forgive their offenders and to overcome the hurt in order to live a fulfilled life in you Jesus. Ease all blame, hurt, pain, shame, guilt, anger, bitterness, etc. Holy Spirit comfort them at this time and bring divine healing to their hearts. Teach us all your definition of intimacy by the experiences we have. In Jesus' name,*



*Amen.*

# #brotherskeeper

*As iron sharpens iron, so one friend sharpens a friend.*

*-Proverbs 27:17 (NLT)*

My mother is the 13<sup>th</sup> of 14 children. I can't imagine having this number of kids but I can certainly say that I enjoyed and I continue to enjoy the benefits of having so many aunts and uncles: the cousins. During my primary school days (elementary school), there were five of us (all girls) attending the same school and we were as tight as a band of thieves.

It had been ingrained in us that we were blood and that we needed to look out for each other. "I don't know" was a dangerous phrase in our parts. You did not say, "I don't know" when they asked you what you all did at lunch time and neither do you show up at my grandmother's house a second before your siblings or cousins; dangerous for us but a valuable lesson for life.

I must admit though that sometimes we probably took it a little too far. Generally if one of us got into trouble, every last one of us was in trouble. It was ridiculous. I remember one time my cousin didn't like this girl who had just moved into our community and for whatever reason, they found themselves in a disagreement, and all of my cousins (I think I dodged that one), ended up being upset with this girl. They probably knew nothing about the girl but they were at loggerheads with her because one of us was at loggerheads with her.

Foolish! I know. But it wasn't entirely foolish. I learnt the importance of looking out for someone who was not me and this was the genesis of my tutelage on the topic of accountability. Of course, over the years my definition of the word expanded beyond just "having your back." Along the way, I learnt that "having your back" also encompassed telling some hard truths, even to those whom I loved.

## ***Why Accountability?***

Genesis Chapter 4 and verse 9 provides us with perhaps one of the most well known Biblical phrases: "Am I my brother's keeper?" And this is really the question that accountability answers. Am I my sister's keeper? Am I my brother's keeper? When Cain gave this response to God, God didn't respond because He had foreknowledge of Cain's transgressions. However, I will take the time to

answer your question. Yes. You absolutely are your brother and sister's keeper.

Accountability says that I have your back, I will account for the steps that you take on this journey. I know where you've been and if asked I know where you are. It also means that I will tell you straight up that you're about to jump off a cliff. It means that I am your keeper. I have given you the right to judge me. I have given you permission to look at my affairs, to account for my whereabouts and to check me when necessary. If I may say so, that is some good practice for marriage, y'all. In one word: SUBMISSION.

Accountability is a huge deal to me. The process and establishment of accountability has played an fundamental role in the successes that I've experienced during my purity journey and it has also played an integral role in pulling me back up when I was near a plunge into the deep and murky waters of impurity. I've also had experiences (very rare) where I rejected accountability and I paid the price.

I think accountability is a difficult concept for our generation to grasp. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century I think that everyone's favorite line is, "Don't judge me." People are afraid of hard truths and someone else telling them that they are wrong. It appears that everyone owns a subscription to a philosophy clothed in folly that says loudly and without restraint, "I'm good. The falls are necessary for this journey." I say to reject this philosophy. Avoid as many falls as possible. You don't have to be accountable to everyone but please, be accountable to someone.

There is an unspoken yet implemented rule in my circles. If you're my close friend, you're inadvertently accountable to me and I'm inadvertently accountable to you. It just happens. We don't sit and say, "Hey, would you look out for me?" or "Hey, would you pull me up if you catch me slipping?" It just happens.

When you're in my inner circle, people will know. We go out together, we break bread together, we take pictures together and we worship together. Where I'm from people believe that birds of a feather flock together and where I'm from this means that people will celebrate your successes with me but they'll also tell me when you're up to nonsense. And I don't know about y'all but one of the worst things I can hear repeatedly is "Talk to your friend," especially when it is about the same friend and I'm in the dark.

I had a very close friend of mine who seemingly did not understand these dynamics and eventually the gangrene effect had to be applied. He had cultivated a reputation for nurturing things that he didn't wish to see grow. If you ask me that was only a small part of the problem and this would remain a

minute problem. However, he didn't want to be accountable to anyone for his actions; not to me, or to any other one of our close friends or the people closest to him in his life.

Like most people who reject the gift of accountability, my friend would find out that it would have been better to accept it than to run from it and these are the reasons why:

1. Accountability means people have your back. Despite how you may feel, you know that these people have your best interests at heart and so it becomes easier to submit to the correction of these people.
2. Accountability means foresight as opposed to myopia. Sometimes those whom you are accountable to can see the destination of your footwork well before you see it. It may be because they have had similar experiences or observed similar phenomena. Whatever the case, at the end of the day it's nice to know that your footwork is going to land you into deep and dangerous waters before you actually get there. It gives you the opportunity to alter your course.
3. Accountability is wisdom.
4. Accountability is submission.

I'm hoping that you are beginning to see the beauty and importance of accountability. If you are, by now you're wondering, "How do I go about this accountability thing?" No problem. I will share with you some of the criteria that I have used to select good accountability partners in my life. Do note that although this book is about sexual purity that the same criteria can be used to pick an accountability partner for marriage, matters of finance and other matters of spiritual conduct.

### ***Accountability Partners***

Selecting a good accountability partner is similar to selecting the right clothes for a particular event. There are times when you have that one dress/suit in your closet that can seemingly meet every need if you dress it up with the right accessories, tie, blazer or shoes, then there are some clothes that are

strictly casual and there are others that are strictly formal.

I say this to say that not every single one of your close friends or close family members will make good accountability partners. Some of these same people may be experiencing the same issues that you are experiencing without having wielded triumph over their circumstances. Others are not trustworthy enough and there are some who are trustworthy, and have your best interest at heart but you just can't get down to being real with them.

### ***Your Accountability Partner is Trustworthy***

When someone is trustworthy you feel like you can tell them anything and that it will stay safe. You don't necessarily want to share your trials, weaknesses or difficulties with someone who'll have it around town 5 seconds after you share it. I see you shaking your head at my 5 second timeline. But in this day and age of smart phones and high speed internet, 5 seconds is even too much time.

### ***Your Accountability Partner is Someone That You Can Keep it Real with***

There are some people that we trust and we know that they will take our secrets to the grave but somehow we can't get down to being real with them about certain topics and issues. It's just not happening. For example, I don't speak about sex with my mother and for that reason she cannot be my accountability partner where sexual purity is concerned.

These things are important to note because with accountability it is a necessity to be able to come clean to your accountability partner about anything. If you're unmarried and you had sex last night, you should be able to share it with that person despite the disappointment that you know that he/she will feel.

My sister says something that is immensely profound to me: "the power of sin lies in the secrecy of sin." I think it is so important to have people in your life that you can openly confess your faults to. I remember when I first found myself spending copious amounts of time watching pornography, I called someone who I was accountable to and I said, "Hey, I am in big trouble," and that was a tremendous blessing. It was good to know that someone knew that I was misbehaving and would check on me to ensure that I wasn't

On your part there will be fear, trepidation and possibly shame and guilt. However, deep within you,

you know that this is someone with whom you can share your triumphs as well as your defeats. He/she will celebrate your successes and help you move on from your defeats. I must say to you that if you find one such person in this lifetime that you are tremendously blessed. I know that I am.

### ***Your Accountability Partner Has Attained Success in the Area in Which You Are Accountable to Him/Her***

I have a personal philosophy. I don't pay too much attention to people who haven't gone where I intend to reach in life. At the very least, they must at least be successfully on the path that will lead me to my desired destination.

An accountability partner also takes the role of mentor. That individual should be able to give you solid advice or instruction in a particular area that you wish to attain success in, and if followed, your result should be success. Most times the driving force behind solid advice is experience. It is likely that this person has been where you are and has gotten to where you desire to go.

As a result, in your quest for sexual purity, your accountability partner should not be someone who is defeated in the same struggles that you are experiencing. This person should have experienced or should be experiencing success and victory in the areas that he/she advises you on/in.

Look at it this way: it would be dangerous to take advice about how to treat a woman well or how to be treated well by a man from an uncle who is known ONLY for domestic abuse towards women. He may have a cerebral understanding of what that is, but until the fruits of treating a woman well manifest in his life he only has a detached and theoretical understanding of what it is to treat a woman well or what it is for a woman to be treated well by a man.

### ***That person CAN and WILL correct you***

It is a mark of wisdom to give certain people the right to correct you but it is a mark of spiritual maturity to be able to take correction from just about anyone. Taking correction from just about anyone requires one to objectively look at what that individual is saying, take the good from it and leave the bad regardless of who the individual is. That being said, I had not reached that point until very recently. And just in case you haven't reached that point yet, my advice to you is to walk in wisdom and be accountable to someone that you can receive correction from.

Right now I am at a place where I will receive correction from just about anyone. But before then there were a select few who I gave the right to correct me and no matter how they laid it on me – toughness or gentleness – I would take it. I felt no animosity or anger towards them when they corrected me; I sometimes never even felt the need to go on the defense. I just took it. Sometimes, I was mad, but I took it anyways. I knew that it was for my benefit.

If you have these types of people in your life trust me when I say that these are some of the best people to be accountable to because you can really hear and see when you're wrong. You know that these people care, that they have your best interests at heart, that they wouldn't do anything to steer you wrong, but most importantly, you know that they are rooted and grounded in the wisdom of God.

### ***That person restores with a spirit of gentleness***

*Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer<sup>[a]</sup> is overcome by some sin, you who are godly<sup>[b]</sup> should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. <sup>2</sup> Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.*

*-Galatians 6:1-2 (NLT)*

It is great to find an accountability partner who can correct you but this person becomes less efficient if they are unable to bring you into a place of restoration. So yes, your accountability partner must be able to correct you but he/she must be able to guide you into a place of restoration and he/she must be able to do so in gentleness.

You need an accountability partner who can say, "This behavior is absolutely unacceptable," but this very same person needs to be able to hug you and say "Let's try to understand the root of this behavior and let's see what we can do to ensure that it occurs less frequently or to ensure that it NEVER happens again."

For certain cultures, the trait of gentleness is a given. But I think that most persons from the Caribbean and Africa will agree that gentleness is not something that comes easily or naturally in our parts. It just isn't part of our culture. The natural or most common thing in our parts is tough love. Now, tough love is good especially in situations where correction is being rendered. But from my experience correction is often rendered without the follow up of restoration and inadvertently without the follow up of gentleness.

From the things that I've learnt in my time interacting with young people, more often than not (when correction becomes a necessity), I say go along with gentleness. I've gleaned that tough love usually becomes the option when we believe that we've clearly pinpointed the roots of a situation. But oftentimes things are not always as they seem. Besides, both disappointment and expectations can be communicated via the language of gentleness.

So if you're reading this and you devote time as an accountability partner to a friend or young person and you come from a background where gentleness is a rare thing, it would be a wise thing to begin to cultivate the fruit of gentleness within you. It would make you far more effective as an accountability partner.

*Two are better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up.*

*-Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (NKJV)*



**CHALLENGE: GET AN ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER**

This chapter’s challenge is simple. If you don’t already have one, and you’re serious about this journey, now would be a good time to get an accountability partner. So, here it goes:

- 1. Pick 7 of the people closest to you (if you have so many)
- 2. Use the table below to determine if they’re suitable accountability partners by ticking. I would express suitability as meeting at least 4 out of the 5 criteria. TW is trustworthy and KIR is Keep it Real.

**ACCOUNTABILITY TABLE**

Name	TW	KIR	Correction	Success	Restores

I also want to encourage those who are already responsible for someone – someone is accountable to you – to become better accountability partners. Are there areas (based on what you’ve read) where you can step your game up? Now is a good time to do so.

**PRAYER**

*Dear Lord, I pray right now that you fill my life with people I can be accountable to on this journey. I need people in my life that I can share with, who will advise and build me up according to your Word. I also pray that you make me someone that my peers can be accountable to as we serve you together. In Jesus’ name,*

*Amen.*

# #restoration

*When we learn from experience, the scars of sin can lead us to restoration and a renewed intimacy with God.*

*-Charles Stanley*

As I was writing this book, I entered into a conversation with one of my unsaved friends. She asked me what I was up to and I expressed to her that I was trying to complete a book to get it to publishing. She then asked me what the book was about. I was skeptical. Should I tell her? Would she understand?

I finally mustered up the courage to tell her that I was writing the book in the hopes of encouraging young men and women to strive for purity and to walk the path of purity well. Her response was one that would give anyone an opportunity to explain the power of restoration. She laughed, and said that she was a few men too late.

For me, her response was golden because I knew that this summed up exactly how many people who would read this book would feel. Masturbation, check. Pornography, check. Fornication, check. Ummm... Chadia, there's nothing on this list that I have not done.

You may feel like you have violated every single law of purity and that there is no hope for you or like my friend, you may feel like you're a few men or few women too late. But this is far from the truth. Out of all the chapters that you've read, this chapter may very well be the most important chapter.

Some of you are reading this and you were not raised in Christian homes. You may feel cheated that you were never exposed to the value of purity. Some of you were raised in church, you dedicated your life to church and at some point you decided that it was important for you to step out to create a testimony.<sup>[3]</sup> You may have been molested, or you may struggle with your sexuality. Whatever the case, I promise you that there is nothing that you could have done that will prevent you from coming into a place of restored purity.

When I speak to young men and women on the subject of the restoration of purity, I often like to bring up the story of the immoral woman with the alabaster box. To put it plainly, she was a whore. In today's society she would be called a slut or a "jamet" or a THOT, or whatever term it is that you use

in your part of the world. She did a lot worse than some of you who are contemplating on whether you've ruined your chance of being able to walk the purity journey. Still, I believe that she is the Bible's greatest example of restored purity and one of the most dynamic worshippers.

When the immoral woman entered the room where Jesus was and she anointed His feet with a fragrance that scholars believe to be a year's worth of wages, some, including His disciples, questioned the validity of Jesus' office of prophet or His claims to be the Son of God. What kind of prophet would allow such an unclean individual to inhabit the same space as He did? What kind of prophet?

Some of you have the exact thoughts. After all that I've done, will a holy God allow me into His presence?

I loved Jesus' response. It came in the form of a parable. He compared a forgiven debt of 50 pieces of silver to a forgiven debt of 500 pieces of silver. Which man would be more ecstatic? The one whose debt was 50 pieces of silver or the one whose debt was 500 pieces of silver? The parable serves as an answer to the questions that those who criticized posed and it also served as a sharp rebuke.

In the parable, Jesus spoke of a forgiven debt. This was to bring to the attention of those who criticized that this woman was already forgiven. It was her acceptance of the gift of forgiveness that fueled her gratitude. So to answer your question of whether God allows disrepute and unholiness in His presence: from all Biblical accounts, He does not. But the beauty is that the gift of forgiveness has already been prepared and will wipe away the mark of sin at the very moment that you accept the gift.

The rebuke: We can NEVER understand what we haven't experienced. This woman's worship was an expression of gratitude for the magnitude of the debt that she was forgiven. Her grasp of the great sin that she was forgiven caused her to anoint Jesus with a year's worth of wages, and wipe His feet with her hair. How does that apply to you?

I shared all this with you simply to say that sometimes it is the great magnitude of your sin that will bring forth in you a well spring of magnanimous worship – it will cause you to break your alabaster box. The larger your sins, the larger the debt that will have to be forgiven and the larger the forgiven debt, the larger and more lavish your worship – your expression of gratitude – will be. When you begin to understand the magnitude of the sin that Jesus has forgiven you it becomes an opportunity to rejoice and be grateful with great abandon.

However, this exposition is not support for sinful behavior. If your sin is of a lesser magnitude, you

also have a great deal to be thankful for. Be grateful that your adherence to the wisdom and commands of God has saved you a world of hurt, pain, and brokenness and the time and effort that you would spend restoring and rebuilding could now be spent progressing. Be mindful, that while forgiveness wipes away the mark of sin, it does not erase its consequences. You would still have to deal with the residue of sin.

### ***Restoration is a Process***

Some people have the wrong idea about restoration. I've accepted the forgiveness of Jesus Christ. Yoohoo! I have been restored. Uh...No! It is not a magical thing. Restoration is a product of time and effort.

Think of your most beautiful vase. It fell off the countertop, and it broke. This is a rare artifact and you've decided that you're not throwing it into the trash. You decide that you're going to restore it with love. The process of restoration includes gathering all the broken pieces, sourcing the right type of glue because the wrong one will leave stains and smudges, as well as taking the time, effort and patience to put in place every single piece until this vase takes the exact form that it was in before it was broken. Now tell me, does this sound like something that is going to be easy?

To my brothers, think of that 1969 Chevy Impala that you got for next to nothing at an auction. On any other day, this car would have been worth so much more. However, the paint job needs some considerable work, the leather seats are all torn up, the doors have dimples in them, certain parts have rust and one of the mirrors is broken. But you're not too worried. Its lessened value is to your benefit. You know that when you restore this gem of a car, it is going to be worth considerably more than what you paid for it and put into it.

For days, and months you're under the hood of this car. You spend another couple months on getting rid of the rust and the paint job and then you spend another couple of months getting the interior ready. It's time consuming. The process took your time, your money, your effort and your patience but you believe that it is worth it.

Restoration of purity is no different. It will take time, effort and patience to put back the pieces of your broken heart. It will take time and effort to erase old philosophies and reinstate new ones. It will take time and effort to learn to communicate well, and to heal the sting of hurt that you're nursing. You are in essence taking time to deal with the consequences of bad habits, bad experiences and terrible philosophies. But just like seeing your vase come back into form or seeing that classic car restored

like new, it is absolutely worth it.

## ***The Process***

### ***Acceptance of Forgiveness***

If you cannot come into a place where you believe and embrace that your sin has been forgiven, then guilt will forever be your companion and restoration your enemy. It is important to accept that no matter what you have done Jesus has already paid the price for it. Redemption at Calvary has given you the right to walk in freedom. Remember, you cannot claim ownership to something that you haven't accepted.

### ***Spend Time in the Word and in Prayer***

After forgiveness has been accepted, the next best thing to do is to spend time in the Word getting to know what God expects from you on the journey of purity in addition to spending time in prayer getting to know Him and His will for your life. This part of the process is instrumental to the renewal of mind that should take place as you take this journey.

Attending your church Prayer Meeting, Bible Study, Youth Ministry, Young Adults Ministry, Women's Ministry or Men's Ministry will play an integral role in sharpening you and directing you in the right way to go and it will give you an opportunity to meet and be mentored by the right people.

### ***Be sure to get an accountability partner***

You've read this word so many times in this book that you're probably sick of it by now. But it is important. It is important to have someone (a human being) who will hold you accountable. "Iron sharpeneth iron" and we are to be our brother's keeper. And it's just really nice to know that you're not walking the route alone. It's an awesome feeling to know that someone will pick you up if you fall by the wayside. It's awesome to know that someone knows and understands what you're going through.

## ***Walk the Path of purity:***

Remember, purity is an inexhaustible journey. If you're conscious of that, you'll come to terms with the reality that this is something that you would need to pursue continually. It is not self-sustained. You will attain absolutely zero progress if you don't walk it. If you're ever content to remain at any point in this journey, just stop walking all you need to do is stop walking.

## **PRAYER**

*Dear Lord, restore me from my innermost being today. Forgive me Jesus for where I've fallen short and replenish me. Draw me unto yourself again as I seek to complete this path to purity. In Jesus' name,*

*Amen.*

## #pureequalswhole

When I compare where I was on the morning that I wrote the blog post to where I am now, I see immense growth that calls for a praise dance in my spirit. It's like a child. You don't see exact moments of growth but when you compare what you see before you to pictures of previous weeks, or imprints in your memory you see longer legs, a more defined nose or more chiseled face. My purity journey has been a similar experience. I have grown and although I can't pinpoint the exact moments of growth, looking back has allowed me to see the changes that have taken place in my life.

For one thing, I came into an understanding that purity is not something that happens without effort neither is it a onetime occurrence. Purity is something that must be consciously pursued, and the journey which characterizes its success is inexhaustible. It has no end. You can't decide I'm not having sex until I get married and think that this is the height of purity. Even when you become married, purity is a journey that you do not abandon.

I also learnt that purity is a place of freedom, wisdom and extraordinary living. You will begin to see attitudes and habits that were passed down to you in a new light. You will begin to look at the things that have happened in your past through clearer eyes and you will gladly let go of some of the philosophies and habits that you've held unto so dearly.

Before I share with you some of the greatest blessings that I received from embarking on this journey, I must warn you that the purity journey is not for the fake. Fakeness will give you an illusion of progress. You'll convince yourself that you are walking and moving forward but you will really be in the exact spot at which you started. If you want to experience real progress try starting off this journey by being real.

### *I've Come into an Understanding of Self and Self in Christ*

When you don't know who you are or who you are in Christ, you begin to do stupid things. You measure yourself with weights that do not even begin to do you justice, and you look for validation in places that won't give it to you.

Embarking on this journey of purity forced me to embrace who I was and it also forced me to tweak those areas of weakness and to make them look more like what Christ has said about me. I learnt that purity is not something that you can claim ownership to if you're confused about your identity.



## ***I Communicate Better***

There is a remarkable difference between the phrases “You hurt me,” and “I felt hurt.” One will bring the house down around an emotionally fragile or immature person and the other will get you heard either way.

When you’ve come into a place of emotional integrity, saying the phrase that will get you heard whether an individual is emotionally mature or not becomes easy. Which one do you think will get the job done? I’ll leave the answer at the bottom of the page.

I’ve also improved on apologizing. Saying sorry that I hurt you used to be an immensely difficult thing for me to do. I had a need to be almost perfect; to do no wrong and because of that I operated in a way that didn’t allow me to forge solid relationships in the hopes of not offending anyone. My thinking was that, I don’t have to apologize if I NEVER hurt anyone.

I think humbling myself, and walking in the recognition of my humanity and flawed nature has played an elemental role in solving this problem. And so it is with great pride that I say that the purity journey has allowed me to come into ownership of a dose of humility.

## ***I’m More Considerate of Others***

Prior to consciously pursuing a state of purity, I very rarely took into account the emotions of those whom I was dealing with. In recognizing the importance of emotional integrity to the achievement of the state of purity, I came into a place where I understood the importance of taking care of others; my value system was built and shaped upon a tenet of value to all.

In the name of consideration, I’ve also worked to cultivate the aspect of gentleness in my life. I used to be more of a tough love advocate. It was all I advocated, really. Now I think I’ve found a balance. I still show tough love when I believe it is necessary, but I think that the young people who I speak with, and who share their lives with me and who have deemed me worthy to hold them accountable will say that I am sometimes a much more gentle person in this phase of my life.

## ***I Am More Forgiving***

I would be lying if I said that forgiving someone was one of my strengths. I can hold a grudge. It's probably why I was TOO good at cutting people off. However, as I've grown I can certainly say that I am a more forgiving individual. I can see where God showed me my weakness and created opportunities to allow me to convert them to strengths. I'm not thrilled about the process but I am certainly enjoying the benefits.

I am more open to restoring broken relationships (those that can be salvaged), and I'm more conscious of not letting new experiences back me into a place of bitterness and pain.

### ***My Worship Was Taken to New Dimensions***

The thing that I disliked most about feeling broken and dirty was how that feeling affected my worship. Sometimes, I felt so unworthy that I would never even make it to the church. We often incorrectly think that worship is all about coming into church, singing songs and lifting our hands. However, worship is a lifestyle – a lifestyle of obedience to God.

When I came into an understanding of what purity was and I made a conscious decision to make it the journey that I walked, it ushered me into a place of deeper obedience to the Word of God. My decision to walk pure ushered me into a place of deeper worship. When you please God with your lifestyle, it becomes easy and genuine to lift your hands, sing, and dance and worship Him in reckless abandon.

I really could go on and on and on about the spiritual muscle growth that I've experienced while walking this inexhaustible route called purity. But I'll stop for now, and will share them over time. I think for me these were the most marked growths that I wanted to share.

Ultimately, if I'm asked I will say that I really do believe that purity is God's gift to mankind. It is the access key to living an extraordinary life. When something is pure – take for example water – it is healthy. It nourishes and serves purpose to that which it comes into contact with. When something is pure it is also in operation at its pinnacle. It is potent. It is undiluted. When something is pure it is clear. It allows for transparency and in this case it allows others to see the light and glory of God.

Where purity is present, ministries are taken to new dimensions, worship is an entirely new experience, relationships are mended, selfishness is dispelled, love prevails and one will find value in the smallest things. Living pure is extra-ordinary living.

## **PRAYER**

*Dear Lord, I commit to growth today. I ask that you use all the knowledge I have gained from this book only for my development and progress. I do not want to be in this same place years from now, I want to have testimonies of how this information revolutionized my life and brought me closer to you hence providing me with a more purpose driven, obedient, satisfying existence in you. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

## #thankyou

As I get set to type this conclusion, I recognize that if no one else reads this body of work that it would still be of immense value. While I have heeded to the call to share with others, this is as much my journey as it is yours.

It is my journey to ensure that I submit myself under the hand of God to heal open wounds. It is my journey to get rid of philosophies and mindsets that are contrary to the word of God. It is my journey to become owner to the most prolific brand of emotional integrity. It is my journey to learn to trust, to learn to forgive and to learn not to harbor hurt. It is my journey to consciously walk in purity and to enter into wholeness, God-ordained and God-designed extra-ordinary living. It is also yours.

I could say thank you for taking the time to read but I find it to be impersonal and an inadequate aperture for capturing exactly what is going on here. I think the more appropriate thing to say is thank you for taking the time to share and continue on this journey with me. It's been an absolute pleasure for me and I hope that it has been the same for you.



[1] If you are curious about the process <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodsex/Pages/Sexualarousalinwomen.aspx> gives an excellent explanation.

[2] Two entities that are not the same really speaks to the order of things: Man was made out of the image and likeness of God for the pleasure of God, and woman was created out of the rib of man for the sake and pleasure of man.

[3] Often, young men and women in church feel like they have no testimony. I think that sometimes, young people need to be encouraged that the keeping power of Christ is a sufficient testimony.