
— “The victory of pure reason over superstition will not be achieved without tremendous struggle,” (Haeckel)

Preface

You are holding a miracle. Over and over I threw my hands up in exasperation and cried to my husband, “I can’t do it. The subject--chastity--is too delicate, too controversial, too broad, too misunderstood. I’m afraid I could create more misunderstanding. I don’t know if they’ll be able to overcome the prejudice and hang with me long enough to get a glimpse of the vision I’ve gained.”

“The topic seems pretty clear cut,” he said, “No sex outside of a legal marriage.”

“That’s one of the problems, it’s not clear cut,” I said, “Chastity is in a whole different realm. If we say to our children ‘Don’t steal’ we would mean also, ‘Don’t covet other people’s belongings’. Sex, though, is altogether different. Sexual desire is a part of being human--it’s natural and normal. The desire to steal or lie comes from the dark side of our natures, while wholesome sexual desire is God-given.

“We seem to run from one extreme to another; some people can’t stop talking about sex, and others never begin. There are those who only mention it with a snicker--like it’s all a joke we play on each other. Some think it’s all just a physical itch that must be scratched. We seem to have lost our balance; we don’t know what’s normal, wholesome, or right.

“Sex is not just great because it’s so pleasurable, it’s great because it’s so grand, grand in depth and grand in scope. Men and women were created to be attracted to one another, and that attraction creates bonds of love that inspire like nothing else. It can be the height of virtue, the super-glue that creates circles of love and holds marriages and families together. It’s a refuge and a strength. It’s all so awesome, we’re lucky if we can even begin to appreciate it.

“Through this process babies are created--the most innocent, sweet, angelic beings on earth. Chastity is the immortal virtue; it affects not only our own lives but those of our children, and their children.

“Sometimes, I want to run up and down the streets shouting like

an over-zealous fanatic that sex is too important, too wonderful to take lightly. I've been given a glimpse and I need to share it. But, how can I share such a vision? It's impossible! Now you see why I want to give up."

"You can't give up," he said. "Capture the perspective that you've gained. Show how chastity sets the stage for love and sexual fulfillment. I know it's frustrating, but just keep going."

This conversation with my husband took place over and over as I faced the Goliath of my life: to shine the soft light of logic and reason in an arena ruled by anger, prejudice and false traditions. I wanted to assist the reader to make responsible and ethical sexual decisions, but the process has been maddening--my most difficult labor ever; which says a lot for a mother of eleven who has experienced gut-wrenching labors.

Research was difficult. Books on moral virtue--or chastity--are no longer politically correct. Like the Communists who burned the books that disagreed with the Almighty State, our society has suppressed ideas that disagree with the Almighty Popular Opinion. Even collections of famous quotations have only a few items under the heading of "chastity," and these comments most often take a negative slant.

The word chastity has become so misunderstood that at one point I attempted to discard it altogether. I spent hours searching for a non-controversial substitute, but eventually decided that there is no substitute. The term "abstinence" is only a small part of a greater picture. Moral virtue comes close, but not close enough. Chastity is the only word that fits, but heaven forbid, not the chastity that causes us to love less and feel self-righteous, but the kind that causes us to love more and feel wonderful about it. I call it *enlightened chastity*.

Another challenge I faced was conveying the message in a non-denominational manner. The insights are based upon fundamental American principles: there is a Supreme Creator, we are His children, and we have the power within to direct our own lives in the "pursuit of happiness." The Founding Fathers called these: *self-evident truths*. To this foundation, I have added ideas, quotes from inspirational literature, personal conversations and stories that enlighten as well as entertain.

Another struggle with this writing was discovering the right approach. The first draft was authoritative and scriptural, but it didn't feel right. The second was less authoritative, but still not right. I prayed with all my heart and soul for the strength to get it right. I remember a professor saying, "There's a time when virginity is virtue, and a time when it's a vice." In other words, there's a "time to

embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing". (Ecc. 3: 5) I certainly didn't want anyone to refrain from embracing when it was the "time to embrace".

Gradually, a new and exciting view came into focus, so new it seemed impossible to share; I barely knew it myself. I was haunted with the fear that my words would be inadequate. Writing is a lonely business; isolated from the world, you labor at creating a mosaic of ideas and hope that the reader will capture the same vision. Through the grace of God, and despite my weaknesses, the miracle has occurred: those who have read this manuscript have arrived at the vision I hoped to create.

After reading the book, men have made such comments as: "I never understood before, if only someone had told me; I never realized what I was doing . . . I would have never treated women in that way. . . I want to be a better husband. . . I love my wife so much more after gaining the understanding." One middle-aged university professor said, "It made me realize how I have taken my wife and the love that we have shared for so many years for granted. It's given me a new depth of gratitude."

Women have said, "Where was this book when I needed it? I would have lived my life completely different if I had only known." One young mother said, "If I had read one page of this book while a teenager, I would have chosen to remain virgin until marriage; no one ever told me these things before."

I was thrilled one Sunday afternoon when a friend of our daughter's came to visit. After we exchanged greetings, she said, "I want you to know that before I had a chance to read your book, my mother read the entire thing--and it has changed her life. She's no longer promiscuous. I don't know whether you know it or not, but I left home during high school because I hated to see my mother living with so many different men. She's given birth to seven children--all by different fathers. During high school, I just couldn't handle it anymore, so I moved in with a friend. About a year ago I decided to move back home to see if my Mom and I could get along. Not too long after that, she saw your book in my room, and asked if she could read it. The change is amazing. She doesn't sleep around anymore; she even looks and dresses different. She says she'll never be the same again."

The miracle has happened. There's great power in ideas, power to chart the human soul in its "pursuit of happiness." My hope is that your journey to discover the mosaic of understanding will enlighten your life, and fill you with the desire to restore the treasure of the forgotten virtue.

