

“Is God Punishing Me With Singleness?”

At times I feel tormented regarding sexual issues. I was 21 when I got saved and still a virgin. I committed at that time to be obedient to God's sexual standards. For 27 years I have prayed for marriage and family. I am now 48 and still a virgin. There have been times over the years that the God-given(?) sexual feelings were just tortuous. However, God has not answered my prayers for marriage.

Even though I know that I am within God's will, I feel tremendous shame because I feel like I'm just not good/attractive enough to attract a husband. I look at other women who have husbands and/or children and I just feel like I am defective compared to them.

Also, it seems that plenty of people have premarital sex with impunity and that the way to get a husband is to fornicate (This is what I see demonstrated). Also, a church in my area is going to great lengths this Mother's Day to celebrate and honor single mothers. Those of us who waited and those of us who did it right and married before having children are expected to serve and bless the single mothers, most of whom are single mothers by choice. This just kind of makes me feel like my choice is silly.

I even kind of blame God for making me unattractive so that men won't want me. I just feel so much shame, torment, and low self-esteem. I feel like God might be punishing me or playing games with me.

I am so sorry. That is a very difficult burden to bear. And you are not alone! Proverbs says, “Hope deferred makes the heart sick” (13:12), and there are a lot of heartsick people who would so love a spouse and children, but it hasn't

happened.

It sounds like you may have been listening to the enemy's slanders about God—that He is not good, and He does not really love you, and He is withholding goodies from you because He is capricious. In order to live in peace with your life as it is, may I respectfully suggest that it starts with learning to "live loved," as the author of *The Shack* puts it? I suggest that you pray every day, "Lord, show me how You love me." And be looking for the various ways in which He shows His love to you. It is essential to seek God's help in being content; otherwise, we can turn into grumpy, critical, self-pitying people that others don't want to be around. An "attitude of gratitude" goes a long way in embracing life as it is instead of focusing on what we DON'T have. That's why I strongly encourage people to keep a gratitude journal, recording three things every day for which we can thank the Lord.

I do understand shame, and lived with a "shame disability" for many years before God set me free from it when I accepted His gift of His acceptance, as well as the gift of self-acceptance. I pray you will receive this gift as well, learning to embrace His love for you and see the many ways in which He communicates His love and delight in you, every day.

Sue Bohlin

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"I Can't Forgive Myself for

Not Being a Virgin"

I am writing you in order to possibly get some advice on something that has been laboring me for a long time now. I am an extremely strong Christian who is attending a Christian university in order to become a Youth Pastor as a career/mission. Unfortunately though I have made some very bad choices in my life, and I continually have trouble giving them entirely to God. The biggest battle that I face day in day out is the fact that I am no longer a virgin, and I'm not married. Three months ago I broke up with my girlfriend of two years, because I could no longer live with myself continuing having sex outside of marriage. Since then I have fully given myself to Christ once more, except for the fact that I can not live in peace with the fact that I would not be able to give my virginity to my wife if I get married. I was just wondering if you had any advice for me in how I could possibly live with myself a little better than I am now. I realize that I made an irreversible mistake, and that I must suffer the consequences of my actions, so if you don't have any advice for me than I completely understand. Thanks for being there for people to ask their tough questions to. I know I appreciate it greatly.

Consider the dynamics of the Lord Jesus' exchange with the woman caught in adultery. He looked right past her sin to the precious soul underneath, with total love and acceptance. The same way He looks at you! When He told her, "Go and sin no more," He was acknowledging that she had sinned but the grace of His acceptance was a shame-buster. Don't you know that the shame just fell off her in chunks? Those words communicate the ability to move forward, beyond our sin, into the life of holiness and righteousness God calls us to.

It's true you can't give your virginity to your future wife. But you can give your purity to her. Consider the response of a godly young woman accepting this truth about you and forgiving you for it anyway—as the Lord Jesus said, "He who is

forgiven much, loves much." It prepares you to love this kind of special woman that more more!

I think the enemy of your soul has succeeded in keeping your focus on yourself and your sin—now confessed and repented of, so it's GONE—instead of on Jesus. He has no condemnation for you, and He invites you to give Him your shame since He knows how to deal with it . . . He despises it! (Heb. 12:2) He makes it wither up and disappear!

Don't let Satan have another minute of your life. Every time you are tempted to wallow in your remorse and guilt, turn it around and thank the Lord for forgiving and cleansing you. (Have you let Him cleanse you? [1 John 1:9] If not, thank Him for cleansing AS WELL AS forgiving you.) But He's probably preparing a young lady right now for you who will deal graciously with your past. That young lady might just be someone who has committed the same sin as you, who will not only forgive but fully understand. Then you can both rejoice together in being understood and giving each other lots of grace.

I hope this helps.

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"What About Virgins Marrying Non-Virgins?"

I am engaged to a born again Christian who is not a virgin. Does the Bible say anything about this? We are equally yoked. Why is it strongly advised not to marry someone who is not a

virgin even if their past is just that . . . their past. I have read a few articles on the subject, but few give reasons why. Thank you for taking time to answer my question. Your website has been a wonderful source of help to me and I have passed along several email answers and articles to friends and family who are facing such issues.

I'm so glad you wrote, because it is a privilege to encourage you about this. I think it is a form of legalism or judgmentalism to make non-virgins into an inferior class of people. Does the blood of Jesus not cleanse us from all unrighteousness? You know, there are a lot of technical virgins who are very sexually experienced with everything but intercourse; that is certainly not purity, and it still brings memories of past sexual partners into any marriage. Then there are people who haven't had sex but are still addicted to pornography and masturbation. Guess what: that is a tremendous burden to bring into a marriage!

The ground is level at the foot of the cross. So a person who has repented of their sexual experience and is living a holy and pure life can well be at the same place spiritually as a virgin.

Enjoy this story I came across a few years ago:

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Slandering The Blood of Jesus

One night in a church service a young woman felt the tug of God at her heart. She responded to God's call and accepted Jesus as her Lord and Savior. The young woman had a very rough past, involving alcohol, drugs, and prostitution. But, the change in her was evident. As time went on she became a faithful member of the church. She eventually became involved in the ministry, teaching young children. It was not very long until this faithful young woman had caught the eye and heart of the pastor's son. Their relationship grew and they

began to make wedding plans. This is when the problems began. You see, about one half of the church did not think that a woman with a past such as hers was suitable for a pastor's son. The church members began to argue and fight about the matter. So they decided to have a meeting. As the people made their arguments and tensions increased, the meeting was getting completely out of hand. The young woman became very upset about all the things being brought up about her past. As she began to cry the pastor's son stood to speak. He could not bear the pain it was causing his wife-to-be. He began to speak and his statement was this: "My fiancé's past is not what is on trial here. What you are questioning is the ability of the blood of Jesus to wash away sin. Today you have put the blood of Jesus on trial. So, does it wash away sin or not?" The whole church began to weep as they realized that they had been slandering the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Too often, even as Christians, we bring up the past and use it as a weapon against our brothers and sisters. Forgiveness is a very foundational part of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. If the blood of Jesus does not cleanse the other person completely then it cannot cleanse us completely. If that is the case, then we are all in a lot of trouble. What can wash away my sins, nothing but the blood of Jesus . . . end of case!!! God forgives . . . so should we.

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Hope this helps!

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