

On Gaining and Keeping Purity, II

love is brought to perfection in us" (1 Jn 4:12).

This love, as we have seen, can be experienced only when it is accepted as a gift, not as what one deserves. The beauty of it is that, to fully experience the gift of another, one must become a gift. "Anyone who wishes to give love must also receive love as a gift," writes Pope Benedict XVI in *Deus Caritas Est* (God Is Love):

"Certainly, as the Lord tells us, one can become a source from which rivers of living water flow (cf Jn 7:37-38). Yet to become such a source, one must constantly drink anew from the original source, which is Jesus Christ, from whose pierced heart flows the love of God (cf Jn 19:34)."

Loving others as God loves them requires truth and integrity -- qualities that are absent in sex outside of marriage.

In non-marital sex, your body says, "I give myself to you completely," while your heart says, "nope," "maybe," or "hope so." The dichotomy between what is done and what is felt is spiritually damaging, because what you do with your body affects your soul.

"The body, and it alone, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the

spiritual and the divine," John Paul II says in the *Theology of the Body*. "It was created to transfer into the visible reality of the world the mystery hidden since time immemorial in God, and thus be a sign of it."

That mystery has its source in the ultimate union -- that of God and His Church in heaven. To the extent that you reflect God's love, your body and soul are at heaven's leading edge.

Living chastely means recognizing your true residence and living as though you are already there. The size of your home is determined by the size of your heart. As countless saints have discovered, it is truly living large.

9. But of all the reasons to be chaste, perhaps the greatest is the teaching of Our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount; "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." (Mt. 5:8)

Then let's not forget what the saints have said about purity. Here are some examples:

"We must be pure. I do not speak merely of the purity of the senses. We must observe great purity in our will, in our intentions, in all our actions." St. Peter Julian Eymard

Continuing with reasons for purity:

6. **Honor.** Samuel Johnson, in *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), defined honor as having several senses, the first of which was "nobility of soul, magnanimity, and a scorn of meanness." This sort of honor derives from the perceived virtuous conduct and personal integrity of the person endowed with it.

To possess honor within and without is the only way for a Christian to live. To strive to be an honorable man or woman is a great goal, and purity is integral to this. An honorable man does not lie, or seek to hide from the gaze of God, but impurity necessitates both lying and hiding.

In Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, Isabelle pleads with the deputy Angelo for her brother's life. He (without a shred of honor) seeks to seduce her, and promises her brother's life if she succumbs to him. Her response is magnificent.

O perilous mouths

That bear in them one and the self-same tongue

Either of condemnation or approval,
Bidding the law make curtsy to their will;
Hooking both right and wrong to th' appetite,
To follow as it draws! I'll to my brother.

Though he hath fall'n by prompture of the blood,

Yet hath he in him such a mind of honour
That, had he twenty heads to tender down
On twenty bloody blocks, he'd yield them up
Before his sister should her body stoop
To such abhor'd pollution.

Then, Isabel, live chaste, and, brother, die:
More than our brother is our chastity.
I'll tell him yet of Angelo's request,
And fit his mind to death, for his soul's rest.

7. **Dramatically increase your odds of having a lasting marriage.** Study after study has shown that if a couple engages in the marital act before marriage, the pair is far more likely to get divorced. And the divorce rate for couples who cohabitate is about twice that of couples who do not cohabitate.

Moreover, the more that one experiments with different partners, the less one will be able to maintain a committed relationship. Patrick Fagan, a researcher for the Heritage Foundation noted, "Who would have thought that the price of sleeping with even one partner would lead to divorce for almost half of those who had only one extra tryst?"

8. **Learning to love as God loves us.**

Again, using Dawn Eden:

The hunger for love is so great that people often attach its name to emotions or impulses that are far inferior to the real thing. As St. John wrote, God is love. In becoming man, He showed us how we are to love one another -- fully, completely, and sacrificially, with nothing held back.

The key to love is chastity, because it is only through chastity that we can learn to love one another as God loves us. That kind of love does not depend upon what another does for us. We love others because God gave us the ability to do so, and it is in doing so that we fulfill our destiny as His children. "If we love one another, God remains in us, and his