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# and the bride wore white

Deciding to Live a Lifestyle of Purity

*[God's grace] teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. (Titus 2:12–13)*

**T**he day I met the man who would become my husband, he had just returned from Florida, where he and the rest of the varsity tennis team had spent spring break practicing endlessly. His white teeth contrasted sharply with the deep tan and his dark hair. His nose was peeling just a bit as he began to flirt with me. That profile of his cheery countenance is etched in my mind forever.

On my wedding day and at my request, his tan was there to contrast with the clean white shirt and bow tie we had chosen for him to wear under his long black tails. He was the man of my dreams, and this day was a fairy tale come true. And me? I wore a white hand-beaded dress with a nine-foot train. I marched across fresh rose petals

as violinists, stretched along both sides of the sanctuary, played the wedding march. At the front of the sanctuary, we faced our guests so that they could see the joy on our faces as we exchanged vows. The kiss was sweet and simple, ending with a knowing glance. There would be more time for tenderness that night.

At the reception, guests munched on hors d'oeuvres as an orchestra played in the background, pausing only for the announcement from the master of ceremonies, "Ladies and Gentlemen, our bride and groom have arrived. I present for the first time in public Mr. and Mrs. . . ." I was a Mrs.! Applause filled the room as the strains from the orchestra ushered us to our head table. I waltzed beautifully with my father, who returned a bow to my groom a few minutes into the waltz. As my new husband and I started to dance, we succeeded in royally ruining the graceful presence my father had established, but it didn't matter. We were the prince and princess of the ball, and anything we did would charm the guests.

Hours later, the princess found herself locked in the bathroom of a honeymoon suite, trying to decide how to make her grand entrance. (If I had it to do over again, I would claim the room for myself and lock him in the bathroom to decide when and how to enter!) Was it too soon for the lacy negligee? Were the full-length satin pj's too modest for tonight? Should I put my hair up? Would it seem too vain to freshen my makeup? We had not discussed lights—would they be on or off when I came out? In the end, I opted for the modesty and the vanity. (And hoped the lights would be low!)

But when my eyes met my husband's deep blue ones . . . full of compassion and true love . . . the nervousness was replaced with a knowing. We had waited. We had made it through the maze of temptation, and now a warm and comforting Presence was with us, assuring us that this covenant into which we were about to enter would be blessed.

And the blessing was more than we had hoped for.



**H**ow did we make it? God knows that I was not perfect. How did I wait for the wonderful gift of being one with a man I so tenderly loved? Well, it's a wonderful, romantic story that includes moments of critical decisions . . . some I am proud of and some I wish I had made differently. I am going to share it all with you. Through it I learned seven special secrets that gave me the strength to make it through a lot of temptation.

It all started with the truth of Titus 2:12–13. Those verses say that God's grace does not automatically keep us from worldly passions. In all of your love for God,

you could be blindsided by worldly passions. When I realized how difficult the path of purity can be, I stood before God and I said, "OK, teach me to say no. I know these worldly passions exist, but I know the only way I will be able to say no is if You teach me!" And from that moment on, God worked in me and gave me a resolve that I did not even know that I could have within me. The path . . . and the waiting . . . were much easier. The difference was that now I had placed myself in God's presence to be taught how to say no to worldly passions.

If you didn't go to class, your teacher could not fill you with all of the knowledge that he or she had to give. The God of the universe won't teach you either, unless you place yourself in His presence. I have been praying for you. I want so desperately for you to stand before God and to ask Him to teach you to say no to worldly passions so that you can live a self-controlled, godly, upright life.

You cannot attain purity all on your own.

I cannot unveil to you some formula of protection.

Your parents cannot tell you something that will keep you innocent.

Only God can do that!

Won't you stop right now and ask Him to teach you as you read this book to say no to worldly passions?



**WRITE YOUR STORY.** Now, here is the most important part of this book. You need a journal or notebook to really make this book change your life. You see, it's not what I write that is important and can protect your purity. It is what you write that will knock Satan between the eyes.

Get out your journal and write a letter to God. Explain to Him where you are in your struggle to stand pure before Him. It could be any area of your life—sexuality, substance abuse, language, anger—anything that is causing heartache in your life. Give each part of your history over to Him. Tell Him you are sorry if you have failed. Pray that He will keep you shielded from worldly passions. And specifically request Him to be your teacher while you are reading this book.

**Go ahead. Write!**

I have prayed for you and for this very moment in your life.

If you feel God telling you to ponder what you've written or what you have heard Him saying, then just be quiet for today, but come back soon! You and I are going on a complete journey of our sexual lives—that is, yours and mine. For me,

we're going to go back a few years, and I am going to tell you about some of my most intimate moments—some shameful and some quite beautiful. For you, we are going to build a complete godly vision of your love life to come. Let's go!

### MY STORY

As you will soon see, not every choice I made about my sexual purity was governed by God's plan. I never dreamed of having a ministry to encourage young girls to treasure their purity. God pushed me into doing my very first purity retreat when a conflict arose in my church over whether or not a junior in high school should attend a women's retreat dealing with sexual healing. Since I was a corporate trainer, the women of the church asked me to put together a purity retreat specifically for the junior and senior high girls. I have to admit, my pride pleaded with the Lord for another assignment, but I eventually gave in. I did not share any of myself on that first retreat, but I saw women who did, and I saw how incredible the response was to how "real" they were. I cautiously walked into the arena of exposing myself and found junior high, senior high, and college-aged girls who were incredibly challenged by my story, much to my humility. It made them eager to explore God's heart on the matter of sexuality. And so, I offer you my story in these pages. It has been rewritten through meticulous retrieval of my memory through sixteen years of diaries and journals. I present it in a narrative format at the beginning of each chapter. Not one detail written about within these pages was made up. They were all carefully recorded within my journals. God must have known they would be used for this book.

### CELEBRATION STORIES

Laced throughout this book are many short stories about friends I have known for years or have met at my purity retreats. A few are noted as "Celebration Stories" for the great work God has done in their life through this very book! In many cases, I use just a first name or I have changed the name to protect the person's privacy or the privacy of someone else who may have been involved in the person's story. Most of these stories were submitted by the young women who've lived them. A few are my favorite memories from the past few years!



# Satan's big fat

sex lies



## CELEBRATION STORY

### Sarah Marinau on Journaling

*I actually picked up the book *And the Bride Wore White* after my school friend had recently gotten married and given birth to her first child just five months after the wedding. The title made me think of my friend who was a Christian but had obviously given up some of the standards she believed in. I read the book, and not only did I not want to put it down, but I also started a prayer journal in which I learned to pour my heart out to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It was such an encouraging book. Whenever meeting a girlfriend, I would ask, "Have you read *And the Bride Wore White*?"*

*Sarah Marinau, Australia*

*Sarah went on to host a princess party at her house for younger girls aged 13–20. She has become a "burning flame"!*

