

BUT IS IT REALISTIC?

Yes! And many young people are proving it. It may not always be easy, but it will be worth it and spare you a lot of heartache and misery.

You might get the impression from the media and the internet that sex is the most important thing in life, but it isn't. Life is about more than getting close to someone sexually. You can live a totally fulfilled life without sex, and many people do.

Your hormones are no different from those your grandparents had when they were younger, but most of their generation successfully saved sex for marriage. True, they didn't live in such a sex-saturated society, but you don't have to give in to media pressure and you don't need to follow the crowd. We're not like animals at the mercy of our urges and instincts; we're capable of making a positive decision to save sex and sticking to it.

PRACTICAL TIPS

Here are a few tips to help you save sex for marriage:

- be clear about the reasons for saving sex for marriage;
- be firm about sticking to your decision to save sex for your future husband or wife;
- choose friends who share your values and respect your decision;
- steer clear of people and situations where you may be put under pressure;
- take care not to fill your mind with sexual material in magazines and music, and on TV, DVDs and the internet;
- avoid alcohol - stay sober and keep a clear head;
- don't dress in a sexually provocative manner;
- avoid forming an exclusive friendship with someone of the opposite sex until you are in a position to seriously consider getting married;
- when considering a marriage partner, make sure you have the same ideals and standards.

3 Because it leads to a more trusting marriage

When you're married, it will be far easier to trust your husband or wife to be faithful to you if you are the first and only sexual partner they have ever had.

The fact that they have saved themselves for you tells you that they are well able to keep their sexual passions under control. On the other hand, if they have had other sexual partners in the past, it is more difficult to be confident that they will not do so again.

To carry the baggage of previous sexual relationships into a marriage can make it more difficult to have a truly intimate, trusting and satisfying marriage. Knowing that your husband or wife has a previous sexual history can be a source of discomfort and anxiety, even if it is never expressed.

4 Because it's worth the wait

If you save sex for marriage, you'll be able to set out on married life with nothing to hide.

There will be no skeletons in the cupboard and no memories of previous sexual relationships that you find it hard to put out of your mind. You'll be able to enjoy married life without the scars, guilt, and flashbacks to earlier broken relationships.

You'll have no problem finding people who had sex before they were married but wish they had waited, but you'll be hard pushed to find people who regret choosing to save sex for marriage.

The joy and satisfaction of saving sex for a healthy, trusting, committed marriage far outweigh any passing pleasure gained from early sexual experimentation.

WHY SAVE SEX



SAVE SEX FOR MARRIAGE?

YOU MUST BE JOKING - NO ONE DOES THAT THESE DAYS!

Wrong!

More and more young people are beginning to see through the myths being peddled about sex and are deciding to save themselves for their future husband or wife.

The contraceptive industry will try to con you into thinking that 'safer sex' is safe. But don't be fooled. Saving sex for marriage – and keeping it there when you are married – is the way to real freedom: freedom from fear, embarrassment, shame and emotional pain, as well as freedom from physical disease.

UNDERSTANDING SEX

Here are three things to remember about sex:

1 It's powerful

Sex is like a fire – it has tremendous potential for good, but it also has the power to hurt and destroy.

In order to serve us well, fire needs to be brought under control. It's the same with sexual intimacy.

When it's kept within marriage, sex is safe and fulfils its deepest purpose. It helps to bind more closely together a man and woman who have committed themselves to each other for life and it has the potential to produce children. Marriage isn't there to spoil your fun but, like a fireguard, it's there to keep you safe.



2 It's special

Sex has become so cheapened in a world obsessed with sexual expression that we have lost sight of its special character.

Often it is seen merely as a casual, recreational activity to bring personal pleasure.

But there's far more to it than that. Sex is not intended to be just about the joining together of two bodies, but the joining of two lives. In the context of a faithful, lifelong marriage, sexual intimacy expresses the total self-giving of a husband and wife to each other.

3 It belongs in marriage

Sex is intended to be an expression of love, but love and sex are not the same thing.

It's easy to get involved with someone sexually without *really* loving them. True love is about far more than feelings - it's about commitment, and that's where marriage comes in.

One father gave this advice to his sons: 'Never say "I love you" to a girl unless you are ready to follow it up with, "Will you marry me?"'

Love and commitment belong together – that's why true love will be prepared to wait until marriage for sex.

Love, marriage and sex belong together – and in that order. To separate sex from marriage is to separate it from love and that cuts across the longing we all have for stability and permanence.

SAVING SEX

Here are four positive reasons to save sex for marriage:

1 Because it's healthy

There are over 20 sexually transmitted infections (STIs) – that's over 20 strong medical reasons to save sex for marriage.

You may have been told that using a condom is the mark of sexual responsibility, but many young people have found to their cost that using a condom does not guarantee protection against STIs.

The only way you can be sure to avoid being infected with an STI is to keep sexual intimacy within the context of a lifelong, mutually faithful relationship with an uninfected partner. In practice, this rarely occurs outside marriage. The message is clear:

- if you're single, refrain from sexual activity;
- if you're married, be faithful.

2 Because marriage is the best setting in which to bring children into the world

No form of contraception is 100 per cent effective. That means that when you have sex, you face the possibility of creating a new life.

Research shows that, on average, children thrive best in a family where they are raised by their mother and father. It is one of life's greatest joys to bring a baby into the world where the parents are committed to each other and want to support each other in bringing up their child.

But it's generally not such a happy event when a child is born without a stable family home and without the presence of both a mother and father.

