

# SUPPORTING, STRENGTHENING AND SUSTAINING A HEALTHY AND VIRTUOUS YOUTH WITH CHASTITY EDUCATION

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Greetings your Excellencies, fathers, sisters, and all the people of Nigeria. If you would allow me, I would like to try my tongue at your 3 major languages. Gaisuwa mai yawa achikin sunan Yesu Kristi. Mo ki yin ni oruko Jesu Kristi. Ekele diri onye nwanyi Jesu Christi.

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

My name is Andrew. I am from the United States of America. I am 30 years old, and I'm abstaining. I'm not a priest, and I'm not practicing to become a priest. I am by the grace of God, being set free by Christ as He carries out the work of chastity in my heart. I am waiting for my wife, to share the gift of sex in marriage. But the truth is that I have already found the love of my life, the one for whom I was truly waiting, Christ Jesus. He is carrying out a work in me by purifying my heart, a work that he will surely carry out to completion. I am the Executive Director of Universal Chastity Education, a nonprofit organization that helps people to live healthy lives by calling them to Christ, and to his plan for our lives in chastity.

God has given human beings the gift of sexuality, which when expressed in the Biblical context of marriage, as designed by God, allows the giving of oneself fully to another such that the two become one flesh. It is out of this giving of ourselves and receiving of another that human beings become participants in the creation of new life. Sex helps individuals to form a powerful bond, friendship, and intimacy with their spouse. It binds two people together the way nothing else can. However, dark forces have twisted the God-intended sexual purpose and used sexuality to bring death instead of life.

Looking specifically at HIV/AIDS, a disease in which the predominant mode of transmission is sexual contact, the powerful effect of the distortion of human sexuality is evident. Worldwide, 35 million people are infected with HIV, and 71% of these people live in Sub-Saharan Africa. There are 7,200 new HIV infections each day, and 5,700 people die each day as a result of AIDS. Of new infections, 40% occur in youth. AIDS will kill over 2 million people this year.

But, in the midst of the darkness, there is hope. A light shines from Africa, where in Uganda there has been the most remarkable reduction in HIV/AIDS prevalence of anywhere in the world. A landmark report to USAID, "What Happened in Uganda?" documented how Uganda had reduced their HIV prevalence from 15% in 1991 to 5% in 2001. The Ugandans successfully promoted to their youth a lifestyle of respect for sexuality and saving sex only for a faithful marriage: the virtue of chastity.

How did the Ugandans achieve this great success? The HIV prevalence rate peaked during a time when the westerners had been thrown out of the country. The Ugandans came together as a country. They said, "We are poor, and we are African, what can we do to stop this disease?" They knew how the disease was spread, so they taught abstinence until a faithful marriage, the virtue of chastity. They came

together as a society and united under the common goal of reducing HIV prevalence in this way. They taught chastity in all parts of their society: schools, villages, on the radio, in the newspapers, from the pulpit, and from the government. If you ask any Ugandan, they will tell you that the first thing they did was fall to their knees in prayer, "We prayed to change, we prayed to live."

In 2004, Universal Chastity Education (UCE) was established as a non-profit organization by Americans and Ugandans to help reinforce this success, and to share the light of this message with the world. God led the ministry to beyond Uganda- to Burundi, Tanzania, and the USA. To date, 257,859 youth have committed to God and chastity through UCE programs. Lives have been changed and hope restored to many who felt trapped in a culture of death.

One question that is usually asked, is what about condoms? If we look at the issue from a strictly scientific perspective, with regards to HIV/AIDS prevention, we can look at condom effectiveness. According to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (the CDC), Condoms were found to reduce the risk of HIV/AIDS transmission during vaginal sex by 85% when used consistently and correctly. Consistently means that every single time a person has sex, without exception, a condom was used. 'Correctly' means that the 6 step procedure of application was followed without error. If a person does not use a condom once, or if they do not apply it correctly, that 85% drops to no protection, for that encounter.

On a country wide scale, one of the best examples of the lack of effectiveness of the condom comes from Botswana. Botswana has taken the opposite approach from Uganda, promoting condoms heavily as the solution to HIV/AIDS. The HIV prevalence rate in 1990 was 4.7%. The country then began promoting condoms as the answer to HIV. By 1996, the HIV prevalence rate had jumped to 21.8%. By 2009, Botswana had a 24.8% HIV prevalence rate. It is a stark contrast to the drop from 15% to 5% HIV prevalence rate that occurred in Uganda. Botswana's response to the HIV/AIDS crisis is condoms. The result has been the formation of the culture of death. Medical science tells us that the best way to protect ourselves from sexually transmitted diseases is abstaining until a faithful marriage.

Let me ask you a question. The world cup is coming up, yes? I think....Nigeria will play. I want you all to imagine you are in your dream job as the coach of the Super Eagles. The world cup is going to start in just a few days, what will you tell your Super Eagles? Will you tell them to win the world cup? Will you tell them you believe in them, and that they can achieve great things? Or will you tell them that there is no hope for them to win, so they should try to lose as few matches as possible, maybe just try to not let the other teams score too much? Aim for 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> place. If you tell them that there is no hope, how will they play? Surely, they will lose. But if their coach and their country tells them that they can win, what will they do? They will play their hardest, and play to win!

So it is with our youth. So it is with chastity. I am often asked, if the youth we speak to keep their chastity commitments. Yes, the youth have kept their chastity commitments, and this has resulted in improved health. Where possible, UCE tracks the pregnancy statistics of schools visited. As an example, Mubuku Valley Secondary School in Kasese, Uganda reported, "It was through Universal Chastity Education outreaches that our school reduced teenage pregnancies from 25 in 2009/2010 to 7 girls in 2011, then 3 in 2012." Other countries see similar results. In Burundi, Muyange High School reported 26 pregnancies in 2009, decreasing to 1 pregnancy in 2010 following a UCE outreach and likewise, Kayogoro High School had 49 pregnancies drop to 3 the following year.

This great success is not due just to a message of abstinence. It is due to a message of purity, hope,

freedom, second chances, and new life that only Christ can bring. Chastity does not bring laws and rules. Christ's message brings freedom from sin. It changes hearts such that a person no longer desires to sin, and does not live according to the sinful nature, but instead, by the Spirit.

The distortions of the purpose of sexuality across the globe have led to a devaluation of the human person, human dignity, and led our societies into a state of continual self-focus. This has caused sexual abuse, pornography, abortion, sexual addiction, STDs, emotional suffering, in many cases divorce, and ultimately spiritual and physical death. Each day our youth face an onslaught from the world. They face an onslaught of sexualized images. They are barraged with ideas telling them that if they can just obtain things, then they will be happy. Money, alcohol, sex, power, they are told that these are the paths to happiness. We live in a new technological world, with the advent of the 'smart phone' it is often easier to see a person naked than it is to get a glass of water.

So, what message do we most often give our youth to help them face this torrent of flaming arrows from the enemy? Most commonly the answer is: silence. We tell them nothing, we give them no advice, or maybe a passing word. We think they will figure it out for themselves. We believe that someone else will teach them about God's purpose for their lives and about His perfect plan for the human body. We believe that someone else will teach them about sex. Well, someone else does teach them, the world teaches them. And what is left after we follow the ways of the world? We are left with a culture of death that burns our societies to ashes.

You have heard that it was said, 'you shall not murder.' Who among us thinks, 'I would really like to murder my brother!' Why did that commandment have to be in the Bible! Do you wake up and say, please Lord, if only I can avoid murdering today. No, of course not! I don't want to murder! I have no desire to murder! So then, we don't need the law, 'you shall not murder.' We are free from that law because our hearts conform to that law. We don't need to be told, 'you shall not murder,' because we don't want to! Now, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But what if I told you that any man who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart? If you are anything like me when I first read that Scripture, you would look down at the Scripture, weep, and say, 'Jesus, how is that possible?'

Of course, when we are told you should have no desire to commit murder, we have no problem with that, we think, I can do that! But when we hear it said you should not even look at another person lustfully: our knees shake, our voice trembles, our head bows in shame, and we fear what we know we cannot achieve on our own. We fear what is impossible in our sight. Are we to fear Christ's words, or to have confidence in their saving content, in their power? These words have the power to save us from our lusts, because the one who speaks them is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

If I can, I'd like to share one testimony with you from Burundi (I've withheld the woman's name): *"I started being a prostitute in 2007 when I was still 18 years old. I left school in the village and came down to hire a room here in Mvugo near Lake Tanganyika where I could have enough clients from the fishermen. It happened that I attended a UCE open air meeting two years ago I think. I laughed at those who signed the chastity commitment cards. But later on, I decided to sign it also. I joined the church. Now I am married legally, and God has blessed us with 2 children. I thank UCE for the role played to change my life for the better."*

Grace has the power to change the heart so that we are no longer attracted to sin! And again, brother, sister, if you are thinking...I'm too broken, I'm too fallen, I'm too embedded in sin, in lust, brother, sister, Christ is for you! I was where you are, and Christ changed my heart, and He is still changing it every day,

to be more and more like His heart. Christ came to give hope to the hopeless, to heal the sick, he came to renew us and to purify us from all unrighteousness. And I promise you if you let him, He will.

Christ brings freedom. Freedom to say yes or no. Can an alcoholic say no to a drink? No, he is bound in slavery to that alcohol. When offered a drink, he always says yes. Similarly, a drug addict, can he say no to that drug? He cannot, he will always say yes, because he is bound to that drug. But, there is one who died to set these and all captives free. Truly free. He does not bring the freedom to only say yes, yes to everything: but the freedom to say yes or no.

Jesus, in his words on the Sermon on the Mount, is trying to help us reclaim the original goodness of God's perfect plan for our lives, and for sexuality. The new commandment of the Gospel calls us to an inner change, an inner change, of heart. It says that just following rules is not enough. Jesus says, you have heard the rule not to commit adultery, but its not enough! Your heart is still confused. Jesus is telling us He wants our whole hearts! He is calling us to righteousness, to a change of heart and purity that may seem impossible in our eyes, but to Him, to Him who created you, it is not only possible, it is a promise. He will purify our hearts. We only need step out of the boat, on to the water, and have faith in God's plan.

Now, I am not downplaying the importance of abstinence. Thou shalt not commit adultery is a necessary first step. If your heart wants to commit adultery, well then don't. Chastity though, is so much more. Chastity is the successful integration of sexuality within the whole human person. Sex is a wonderful gift, it is something beautiful. As we grow in purity, we experience an inner transformation of our hearts. Christ will order our desires, so that we come to desire what is good, what is true, what is beautiful! Christ brings us freedom from slavery to our passions. Freedom from lust.

So, why is chastity so important? Well, if you want to know what is most sacred in this world, all you need to do is look to that which is most violently and constantly profaned. Satan attacks at the level of God's greatest gifts. Is there any question in our cultures today what is most violently attacked, what is most persistently profaned? The human body and sexuality. Our sexuality is one of our greatest gifts. When Satan attacks sex, he is attacking the very dignity of the human person. He is attacking Life. Satan aims to bring about a culture of death, to reduce the human soul to ashes. Christ, and His plan for our lives through chastity, is the foundation for the culture of Life.

The vision of UCE is not to change laws. If abortion was outlawed worldwide tomorrow, would there still be abortions? Although this would be a wonderful, magnificent victory, yes, there would still be abortions. The vision of UCE is to change hearts, and empower individuals and communities to carry out our God-given commission to bring a message of hope, forgiveness, love, and new life in Christ. Parents, priests, pastors, famers, teachers, government officials, and all who can speak must reach out to youth and adults alike at schools, at home, and in the public square, by talking to their neighbors, speaking from the pulpit, taking to the radio waves, and using whatever platform God has given them to teach about the virtue of chastity, to bring a message of Christ.

Make no mistake we are in a battle, we are in a battle for our lives, and the lives of others! But we battle not against flesh and blood, but against the evil powers of this dark world. Thank you Bishops, and all Life groups who have been fighting for the Culture of Life. We need every person. We must stand together as Christians. I call on you now to join the front lines. The wall of Life has been breached, the culture of death approaches, but come, stand in the gap, shore up the defenses, put on the full armor of God. Stand with Christ. For the sake of Life I urge you, as it says in Ephesians 6, to gird your loins with

the truth, and to encourage one another as you wield the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and always, always we must pray for one another. Pray that the strongholds of the culture of death will be torn down, pray that hearts will be changed, pray that the Kingdom of God will come, and that His will be done. Spread the message of Life! Spread the message of Christ!

If we follow Him, Christ will free us and our societies from the bondage of the culture of death and lead us into the culture of Life.

To God be the Glory.

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