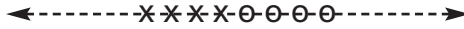


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**who
moved
the
goal
post?**

[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

CHAPTER

1

who
Moved
the goalpost?
I did.
And **you**
can too

It's funny the things a guy remembers.

I stood facing the aisle waiting for the organ to cue my entrance into the church sanctuary. Two hundred guests were craning their necks to get a look at me and my groomsmen. I was agitated and nervous. It had nothing to do with the fact that I'd be at the altar of my own wedding ceremony in moments. It was the fight erupting behind me.

"Jamie, don't be stupid," insisted Troy VanLiere. "Those are my shoes, and you know it."

"If they are your shoes, why are they on my feet?" Jamie Meiden teased.

"You tick me off," growled Troy.

I looked around to see Jamie grinning.

"Great! That's just great!" I grumbled. "*What* are you guys arguing about now?"

I shouldn't have asked that. It just started the whole thing over for about the tenth time. Somehow the tuxedo shop had mixed up our shoe order, and Troy's toes were painfully crammed into his. It was a familiar thing to hear these two argue. After living together for a year, it was common for all three of us to brawl it out. In the end it always worked out, but it was my wedding day and I didn't feel like waiting for things to run their course.

"Sorry, Bob," they both said, secretly laughing at my nervousness.

The next several hours were a blur.

Soon, I was on my way to my honeymoon suite in Baltimore. It would be a very loooooong four-hour trip. After being carted around in antique cars,

escorted into a waiting crowd by a live orchestra and dining on filet and shrimp, Dannah and I sat in my economy car in jeans and T-shirts listening to a cheap radio. We talked as we drove. We'd talked like this hundreds of times. It was surreal. We were married, but nothing really felt different. As normal as it all felt, I realized my start-stop, start-stop driving was reflecting an inner conflict.

45 to 60 in 6 seconds.

..... **60 to 25 in 5 seconds.**

70 to 40 in 4 **25 to 70 in 7 seconds.**

As my mind reeled with delightful thoughts of "I can! We can! We're gonna!" I found myself accelerating. Then I remembered that just a few hours earlier I had joked with my buddies that I would not have sex tonight. They'd been teasing me, saying, "We know what you'll be up to tonight." I wanted to "one-up" them, so I just thought we'd wait a few days so they could not, would not know!

It was hard to believe that I was actually allowed to have sex now, but I was. My new bride sat next to me in the pink button-down shirt that had driven me nuts for months. It was as modest as they come, but somehow . . . wow! The smell of my favorite perfume invited me closer.

There would be no waiting.

The waiting was over.

For four hours, I planned, sweated, accelerated, coasted, and hit the brakes as I tried to figure it all out. Who was going to undress first? How would it all work out? What would I say?

What a ride!

At the honeymoon suite, Dannah went into the bathroom. Six hours and forty-two minutes later—OK, maybe it was only fifteen minutes—she emerged. The thought occurred to me that I'd always worried that I'd end up marrying someone ugly, but when she came out I realized, "She's the one that did!" But she didn't seem to know. Who was I to break the news?

She was the girl I'd always dreamed about. Her blond hair fell in loose curls around her shoulders. Her white and pink silk pj's glistened in the low lights. She looked like an angel.

She was simply spectacular.

she was simply spectacular

What happened next was nothing short of sacred. It was a holy thing.



Somehow, I had muddled my way through the temptation and managed to be a virgin until my wedding night. Guess those guys were right. I couldn't wait past that first night. But you know what? It was worth waiting *until* that night!

How did I make it till that night? God knows that I was not perfect. I marvel at NBA wonder A. C. Green. He's been described in *Sports Illustrated* as "achingly handsome, drippingly rich and gallantly polite. Yet, at thirty-six, he swears he has never, not once, gotten busy."¹ How's a guy like that fend off all the women begging him for attention in the midst of the sexual playpen surrounding professional sports. I cannot wrap my ever-tempted mind around that.

... bammm!

Over the past few years I've seen quite a few sports videos featuring sport's greatest bloop and blunders. Invariably, you'll see a classic video clip of some guy heading into the end zone to catch a pass or to tackle someone when . . . bammm! He smashes face first into the goalpost. Until 1974, the NFL's field goalpost was right on the goal line instead of at the back of the end zone as it is today. This kind of scene happened again and again over the years until someone had a great idea—to move the goalpost out of the way. Problem solved.

Sometimes when you're in the game of life rushing around on the field, the excitement distracts you and the next thing you know you're nose deep in the goalpost of lust. You knew where the goalpost was and you knew how hard it was and that it hurt when you hit it. But what do you do . . . start playing all over again and of course . . . bammm!

I'd like to teach you strategies that can separate you from the constant crash of that goalpost of lust.

**Who moved the goalpost?
I did.
And you can, too!**





**can you identify with
constant defeat in the
face of lust?**

Many of us have moved along in the current of the pop culture. We find ourselves doing what's "normal." We go to movies with foul language and nudity. We watch the most popular (and funniest) TV shows that are filled with sexual jokes. We're exposed to ads featuring barely clothed women who lure us to buy clothing, cars, food, and music. Eventually we plow into the goalpost of lust. With these things pushing me toward the "goalpost," I struggled with lust throughout my teen years. I prayed, cried, punished myself, memorized Scripture and afterward ran right into the goalpost again. I felt like Satan was delighted with me as the pawn in his own version of "Smack Down!"

Can you identify with constant defeat in the face of lust? Do you sometimes think you're the scum of the earth standing in front of

the God of the universe? Have you tried and failed? Congratulations. You qualify! God stands ready to walk with you.

There is hope. I have finally found some of the useable answers that I've been searching for—answers I wished I'd had when I was your age, but all I seemed to hear were tired cliches and slogans like "Let go and let God!" Forget those stupid pep talks. Don't wait for a blinding light. Winning the game of sexual integrity requires a game plan—a set of strategies you live by each day.

If you're ready, let's **rock!**

The bottom line is that we both want to win the game of sexual integrity, right? We need the winningest coach to win such a tough contest. There's only one Coach powerful enough, according to Titus 2:12–13.

Those verses say that God, in His grace, "teaches us to say "No" to worldly passions." Those verses don't offer a simple victory. If you just rest in the fact that you're on "God's team," you'll be blindsided by lust. You have to be willing to be taught, trained, developed, changed, and strengthened. Like a winning athlete, you have to train. You've got to get before the Coach and say, "OK, I know the competition plays dirty and rough, so I need you.

I know the only way I'll win is if you teach me how."

I can't say the game will end. Or that your opponent will never score. The goalpost is always there; and the crowd is always trying to smash your body against it. But one thing I can say: You'll be a contender for sexual integrity if you train under God's grace, fully admitting that only He is qualified to train you for such a contest.

He's not going to do it for you

He's not going to just do it for you. It takes time, discipline, pain, and sweat. You will toil and ache. You will feel yourself stretched beyond your comfort zone. Just when you think that you're ready to play and win, your Coach will call for you to stretch some more.

Are you ready to toil for a victory that won't come easily?

Tell the Coach.

Sexual Integrity Challenge

Sexual Integrity Challenge

You could read what I write all day and never really make any of this stuff work in your life. To make it work, you must do some writing of your own. It's called journaling, guys. It's not so popular these days, but take any great man of the past and you will find pages that recount his extraordinary life. George Washington. Abraham Lincoln. C. S. Lewis. King David. A real journal lets you record what you're doing and feeling and thinking about in response to God's leading your life.



My Story

I'm not a pastor, a counselor, or an expert in the field of sex. I'm just a man. As you will soon see, like every man in the universe, I have struggled to submit to God's plan for sex. Still do. I'm not the poster boy for sexual integrity. (I'm, in fact, a bit afraid of what poster I'd be slapped onto.) There is not one bit of humility, only fear, in me when I say that I don't feel one bit worthy of writing this book. But as I have traveled with my wife, Dannah, who speaks about sexual purity, many young guys have lined up behind me in search of answers. I believe God has asked me to share the secrets I've discovered in battling sexual temptation. For many years I've kept a journal, as I am asking you to do. I've used it to unlock my memory and to remember those moments of failure and success in my own sex life. Nothing I share is made up, but has been retrieved from my journal.

So, dive in with me.

Journaling is, I believe, one of the signs of greatness. Or perhaps, it's just that the time it takes to consider things creates greatness in a man's life.

Now, the thought of keeping a journal may seem intimidating or even nerd-like. As I said, I've learned to endure and even enjoy it sometimes, but I started out feeling very unmotivated, until I found out what it could do in my



My Friends' Stories

Throughout this book are stories of friends who've influenced my quest for sexual integrity. When you see their first and last names, there has been no alteration to their identity or to the story in any way. In some cases, I will use just a first name, which is fictitious, to honor and protect them. In those cases, I may alter the story just enough to protect that specific person, but be assured the story is

real.

life. It can revolutionize *your* relationship with God. God blesses—supernaturally intervenes—in the lives of those who embrace His whispers, to those who hear the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and who find direction and comfort in Him. Journaling can help you hear and respond to His voice in a powerful new way. It will also show you where you started and how far you've come.

At the end of each chapter, I will issue a "Sexual Integrity Challenge." In most cases, this can be done in your journal, which can just be a simple spiral-bound notebook. You really need to stop and take this step if you are serious about not getting stomped by lust anymore.

Right now I want to challenge you to write a letter to God. You see, knowing Him—really knowing Him—is what will give you a sense of reality. Knowing Him is what will give you the freedom to live uninhibited by the crowd. Stop and ask

ask Him to speak to you in the silence like never before

Him to help you step out of the crowd. Ask Him to speak to you in the silence like never before. And sit in the stillness of that silence to hear His voice.

NOTE

1. Rick Reilly, "The NBA Player Who Never Scored" *Sports Illustrated*, December 7, 1999, 100.

