



renewed & REWRAPPED

It's easy and tempting to view losing one's virginity as a once-and-for-all event. And physiologically, there's no question that this is true: you have either had sex or you haven't. But sex is more than just physical. There are relational, emotional, psychological, and spiritual effects of a sexual relationship that go way beyond the physical.

Sex has often been portrayed as one of a long list of things people *shouldn't* do: don't lie, don't steal, don't hurt people, don't have sex. But sex is a gift from God, and it was designed by Him for our enjoyment, along with its most obvious purpose of making babies.

We just need to remember that He designed it as a gift to be unwrapped only within marriage. So what does a person do if he or she has opened the gift early?

You wouldn't say, "I've already told a bunch of lies, so I'm going to keep on telling them." Or, "Man, I've shoplifted a bunch of clothes, so there's no point in stopping now." So why would you say, "I've already had sex, so what difference does it make if I keep on having it?" Because of the significance of sex, it's easy to view losing one's virginity in this light, but it doesn't need to be seen this way.

CHOOSE TO BE renewed

You are a unique individual, created with immense value *as you are*, independent of any relationship. Don't fall into the trap of believing that having sex is the only way for you to be valued by a man or woman. Sex bonds two people together, and when that link is broken, it really hurts. Waiting until marriage to have sex again protects your heart from pain (and it also protects your body from disease). By choosing not to have sex again until you are married, you can be renewed, and you can—in effect—“rewrap the gift.” So what does this renewal look like?

Relational renewal: Commit to basing your relationship on a foundation other than sex, which naturally creates a physical bond between two people that can cloud your judgment and distract you from getting to know the other in a deep and meaningful way.

Emotional renewal: When the bond created by sex is broken, people can be deeply hurt, and experience guilt, shame, disappointment, and rejection. Commit to protecting your emotional well-being by protecting your sexual purity.

Psychological renewal: Commit to seeing yourself as more than an object to be used for someone else's—or your own—gratification. Respect yourself enough to believe that you are a unique and gifted individual worth relating to in a non-sexual way.

Spiritual renewal: Ask God to forgive you for breaking His guidelines for sexual purity. He promises to not only forgive you—but to forget that you ever did something wrong! He can help you to reclaim the treasure of your sexuality. This is the most powerful renewal you can experience, and it's available to you right now.

It's never too late to decide to start over. You can find freedom from your sexual past in deep and meaningful ways, but you are the only one who can make that choice.