## Worth the Wait

### Scope and Sequence
- Topical: Biblical Relationships

### Lesson Objective
- Students will realize that pursuing purity will help them be who God wants them to be both now and for their future spouse.

### Sticky Statement
- It's worth the wait.

### Key Verse
- 1 Timothy 4:12

### Checklist
1. A PowerPoint is available for this lesson.
2. 2 (or more) pristine, white roses
3. Small vase to hold one rose

### Resources
   - [https://teachersource.wol.org/resource/SBS18/37-1/](https://teachersource.wol.org/resource/SBS18/37-1/)
Lesson Overview

I. Sexual purity is a big deal – 1 Corinthians 6:18-20

II. Temptation challenges purity
   A. Jesus understands temptation – Hebrews 4:15
   B. Everyone faces temptation – 1 Corinthians 10:13
   C. Temptation comes from within – James 1:13-15

III. Finding Victory
   A. Pursue purity
      When you find yourself facing a temptation that would compromise your purity, recognize it, admit it and do something about it!
   B. Repent, give it to God, and accept His forgiveness – James 4:7-10
   C. Realize you are forgiven and new – 2 Corinthians 5:17
      Christ didn’t die to save the perfect, He died to save sinners!
   D. Distance yourself from those who aren’t on board with your new direction – 1 Corinthians 15:33-34a

It’s worth the wait!

Hook

Teacher's Note: If you choose, you can split your group up by gender for this lesson. You may need to enlist another teacher ahead of time to teach the second group (male teacher-male students, female teacher-female students).

Teacher's Note: Depending on the size of your group, you will need at least 2 pristine, white roses—1 to display in a vase and 1 or more to pass around the class (if you are splitting up your group, you will need at least 4 roses). Be sure to remove the thorns from the roses ahead of time. The goal of this exercise is to allow one rose to circulate the room throughout the lesson while keeping the other rose untouched. At the end of the lesson, you will compare the two roses and use them as an analogy to a life of sexual purity and a life of sexual promiscuity. You will get the best results for the illustration if you encourage the students to really handle the flower as they look at it rather than just passing it around. With one rose on display, hold the other up as you begin.

What is this? [Holding up the white rose, allow students to answer.]

What do you know about roses? [Allow students to answer.]

If you have ever given or received flowers, how did it make you feel? [Allow students to answer.]

Why do you think people give flowers? [Allow students to answer.]
Did you know that historically, the white rose symbolized innocence and purity? That is why it is often so closely associated with weddings and bridal bouquets. In just a moment you will all have an opportunity to take a closer look at this flower. As it is being passed around take about 30 seconds and really pay attention to it. What do you notice about its fragrance? Feel the difference in the textures of the stem, leaves and petals. You are even welcome to pull a petal off and hang on to it if you’d like. Just keep it circulating as the lesson is going on.

As the flower begins to make its way around, please open your Bibles to 1 Timothy 4:12. [Read 1 Timothy 4:12.]

This verse is written to a young Timothy. Its intent is to encourage him to live an exemplary life in a variety of areas. The focus of this lesson is that last phrase, living a pure life. What exactly does it mean to live a pure life? [Allow students to answer.]

It is difficult to drive down the street, turn on the television, stream a movie or play a game without being bombarded with sexually charged images and language. In a culture that is so overly sexualized, one might assume that purity is no big deal. BUT...

I. Sexual purity is a big deal – 1 Corinthians 6:18-20

In 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 God commands believers to flee from sexual immorality. [Have a student read.] These verses explain that sexual sin affects you differently than all others. You may not fully understand this concept right now, but your bodies are a temple of God’s Holy Spirit which dwells in every believer. Jesus Christ died for you so that you might be forgiven of your sin and saved from a life of sinfulness. You are not your own, you are His and you should live like you really believe that!

This letter is written to the people of Corinth who, much like today, lived in an extremely sexually charged culture. The command to flee is not a one-time event but rather an ongoing process (i.e. continually flee). In other words, God says to continually flee from the sexual immorality that surrounds you.

Think about how amazing it would be on your wedding night to be able to say to your future spouse that you kept your heart, mind and body pure! On that day, you will realize that it’s worth the wait!

The famous philosopher, Aristotle, once said, “Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet.” One thing that makes purity so sweet is that you have to fight so hard for it. Temptations are a real challenge to your purity.
II. Temptation challenges purity

A. Jesus understands temptation – Hebrews 4:15

Hebrews 4:15 explains that Jesus was tempted in every way like all mankind. [Have a student read.] Believe it or not, God knows exactly what you are going through! It stands to reason that among all the temptation that Jesus faced it would likely have included some level of sexual temptations; whatever they might have looked like in His time. The only difference is He never gave in to it!

While understanding that Jesus knows what you are going through doesn’t necessarily make your struggle easier, it is nice to know that the Lord speaks as one who has faced temptation too!

It’s important to understand too, that where we fail, Jesus stood strong. His complete obedience qualified Him to be the perfect sacrifice and freely give His righteousness to us (2 Corinthians 5:21).

It is easy to feel alone when going through temptation, but you need to remember that everyone faces temptation.

B. Everyone faces temptation – 1 Corinthians 10:13

First Corinthians 10:13 reiterates the fact that everyone, not just Jesus, faces temptation. [Have a student read.] What you are struggling through in this fight for purity is nothing new. It is quite certain that your parents went through this battle (gross right?), your youth leader went through this battle, your teachers went through this battle and the vast majority of your friends are going through this battle. In fact, most adults are still going through this battle in one way or another.

The key to remember is that God will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you can handle and He will always provide a way out of the temptation if you are willing to look for it and take it! You are not alone in this; you are surrounded by others who know your struggles and many who have emerged victorious. Encourage one another in this fight because it’s worth the wait! To better understand how to encourage one another, it helps to know where temptation comes from.

C. Temptation comes from within – James 1:13-15

James 1:13-15 explains that, ultimately, temptation comes from within. [Have a student read.] Don’t try to blame God for your temptations or for the fact that you gave into a temptation because God does not tempt you! While God does allow you to go through times of temptation, He is not the one doing the tempting. He makes it clear that temptation comes from sinful desires that dwell within our own hearts.

External influences such as friends, media, selfishness, and pride just feed those desires that already live deep within. Realizing that you are a big part of the problem should help you draw attention to the solution (Proverbs 4:23). Seek God in times of temptation and limit or remove those outside influences that feed your temptations because it’s worth the wait!

Recognizing the reality of temptation and where it comes from ought to drive you to do something about it. The good news is that victory is attainable in this battle!
III. Finding Victory

A. Pursue purity

If you want to find victory in the battle you must flee temptation and pursue purity. Philippians 4:8-9 presents a list of things a believer should pursue. [Have a student read.] Make the pursuit of purity a top priority in this season of your life. This passage challenges believers to focus their attention on that which is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy. Jesus is the complete fulfillment of all these characteristics; therefore, the author of Hebrews encourages us to fix our eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 12:2).

These verses dare you to take all of these things and begin putting them into practice. When you find yourself facing a temptation that would compromise your purity, recognize it, admit it and do something about it! This also includes being very careful about the friends you choose to allow to speak into your life. Surround yourself with those who are likeminded, who share in your convictions and who desire to pursue the same things that you do!

Discussions of purity often lead to the question, “What if I’ve already messed up?” The reality is, some of you may have already messed up! If you have told a dirty joke, ogled someone lustfully, looked at porn, or been sexually promiscuous, you have “messed up” some way or another in the realm of purity. The real question one should ask is, “How can I pursue purity from this day on?”

B. Repent, give it to God, and accept His forgiveness – James 4:7-10

Scripture proclaims in James 4:7-10 that when you make it a point to get closer with God, He makes it a point to get closer with you. [Have a student read.] Maybe you’re listening to this message and you have already lost ground in this fight for purity. Don’t you want freedom from the bondage that it has over you? Did you know God wants to (and will) forgive you and restore you? The battles of the mind find their victory in submitting to God and seeking His will!

There are some things that the Bible says you must do. First, you must recognize that sexual impurity is sinful and, as this passage puts it, wash your hands and purify your hearts of that sin. Like all sin, it should bring you to the point of disgust and shame. God expects believers to take sin seriously; this is no laughing matter. He concludes with the promise that He will lift you up if you will be humble before Him!

C. Realize you are forgiven and new – 2 Corinthians 5:17

Second Corinthians 5:17 proclaims that in Christ you are a new creation. [Have a student read:] Remember, Christ didn’t die to save the perfect, He died to save sinners! Are you willing to recognize your actions as sinful? Are you willing to repent of that sin and allow God to transform your life of sexual promiscuity or pornography addiction into a life of sexual purity? If so, God says the old you is gone (forgiven, put behind you, in the past, DEAD) and that He has made you a new creation (forgiven, restored, worthy, PURE).
D. **Distance** yourself from those who aren’t on board with your new direction

1 Corinthians 15:33-34a

First Corinthians 15 recalls that bad company corrupts good morals. Realize that not everyone is going to applaud your new decision! As was mentioned earlier, there may be some relationships that you need to sever if you are serious about your pursuit of purity. Although it will be tough, it is a journey that is worth taking! God can and will give you a fresh start! Commit from this day forward to live for your God and pursue purity because **it’s worth the wait**!

**Connection**

**Teacher’s Note:** Collect the rose that has been circulating the room. By this point it should be very droopy and wilting. Take out the rose that you set aside earlier and hold the two up next to each other and show the students the contrast!

Take a look at these two roses. If you had to pick one of these two flowers to give your future husband/wife as a gift on your wedding night, which one would you choose? [Allow students to answer.]

Which one would you want to be given? [Allow students to answer.]

Why? [Allow students to answer.]

Most likely you’d want to give (or get) the absolute best. Now imagine that these roses represent your purity. Do you want to marry someone who is bringing this into your marriage? [Holding up the wilting rose.] Do you want this to be the best that you can offer to God when you stand before Him one day? [Still holding up the wilting rose.]

How amazing would it be to stand before your bride/groom and hand them this unblemished rose? [Holding up the untouched rose.] Even more so, how amazing would it be to stand before your Lord Jesus Christ one day and be able to say with confidence that you obeyed His command to pursue a life of purity?

Please don’t forget, if you have already lost ground in this fight it is never too late to commit yourself to God and to a path of purity! God wants to take this wilted rose from you and give you a brand new, fresh start… right now! [Illustrate this by pulling the wilted rose in towards your chest and extending the untouched rose towards students.]

This is especially true if you have been a victim of sexual abuse or rape. You may feel like your purity was taken from you. While your virginity is something that once lost is gone for good, purity can be restored. Christ brings healing, forgiveness and cleansing. You too have been made new through the righteousness of Jesus in your life if you have trusted Him as Savior!
In closing, here are a few practical ideas about how you can begin to pursue a life of purity:

1. Set standards now: Decide now what your standards are! Don’t wait until you find yourself in a compromising situation. Draw lines in the sand and stick with them.
2. Group/double date: If you are going to date, go out on group or double dates. Try to avoid putting yourself into tempting situations by being alone with the opposite sex. Be creative, go out and have fun together, get to know one another, don’t set yourselves up to fail!
3. Don’t date: This may sound absurd but maybe the solution for you at this point in life is to postpone dating. There is nothing wrong with not dating, especially if it is to help you pursue a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ!

Somewhere on your notes write the phrase, “This week I will begin to pursue purity by…” and complete the sentence with a few of the items that we discussed. Make it a point to seek out a friend this week who can help keep you accountable to this. Tell your small group leader who that friend is. Your leader will follow up with you next week.

### Sticky Statement

It’s worth the wait.

### Small Group Discussion Questions

1. **What are some creative ideas for going out on a double or group date?**
   (Possible answers may include: making a meal from scratch, going to a fair or the carnival, going to a friend’s sporting event, visiting a pottery painting studio, serving at a homeless shelter or nursing home together, etc. Encourage the students to think outside the box.)

2. **What are some practical ways you can pursue purity? How could that be beneficial?** (Ask students if anyone has had victory in certain areas. Lead them to dialogue about the immediate and future benefits of living a pure life.)

3. **What are some standards that you can set now that will help you pursue purity?** (Possible answers may include: leave electronics off at night, commit to going on double dates, postpone dating, get an accountability partner, don’t kiss, preserve sex until marriage, etc. Be prepared to talk about some standards that you have in place for your own pursuit of purity. Ask students to reflect on the sentences that they wrote in the decision section of the lesson and if any are willing to share.)