



## True Love Waits Cooperating Ministries Update

### *A Word from Dawn Cornelius, True Love Waits, National Coordinator*

Have you ever noticed the unique ridges and valley of our fingers? I think they exist as reminders that we were born originals, not copies of someone else, with gifts to be used and given for God's purpose. Actor Stephen Baldwin said, "The only gift in life you can give to another person just once is virginity. Save it. Make it special. It's a once in a lifetime experience!"

As lovebirds and the lovelorn scramble for dinner reservations, floral extravaganzas, plush teddy bears, and big red roses, many churches will emphasize the true meaning of love and the benefits of remaining pure, including being sexually abstinent until marriage. In this update, we have included ideas to help churches and organizations promote purity while emphasizing God's great love.

We are praying for you in the days ahead.



### *Valentine's Day – What Churches Can Do to Promote Purity*

Traditionally, February has been considered the "month of love." Around many local churches, it's also become known as "the month for doing something related to True Love Waits."

While True Love Waits certainly strives to be an emphasis for all seasons (which is one of the main reasons we created [\*Path of Purity: A Family Guide\*](#)), it's understandable that churches and organizations give it special attention around Valentine's Day. The timing is a natural fit and students (and parents) may be more open to the benefits of saving sex for marriage than at any other time of the year. February also provides a great opportunity to highlight the message of abstinence with youth before the start of a very busy prom season.

So, with all that in mind, here are some ways churches can take advantage of the True Love Waits message and resources during February:

- **Plan a special study.** This idea can take many different forms. Some churches may want to use their Sunday school or small group time during February to share a series of lessons on God's plan for sexuality. Other churches might choose to hold a TLW-focused [DNOW weekend](#). Whatever the form,

the combination of fun events and meaningful study can combine to have a powerful impact.

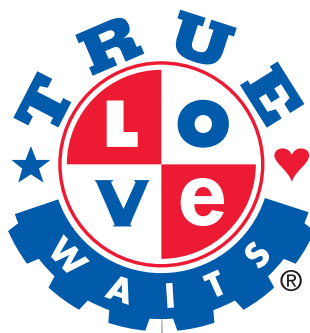
But churches don't have to focus on only the kids. This would be a great time to bring parents together for a short study, as well. *Path of Purity* includes a six-session leader guide online to facilitate discussion about purity in the family. For a shorter study, *Pure Parenting* gives parents some practical help for creating a culture of purity in their homes over the course of four weeks.

- **Plan a special event.** A ceremony makes a huge impression on the life of a teenager. Planning a special event—such as a father-daughter or mother-son dinner—can help reinforce the message of purity and give parents some footholds for continuing the conversation later.

Many churches hold annual TLW promise ceremonies, where the entire body witnesses the commitments made and promises to support the students on their journey of purity. Tokens, such as a True Love Waits ring or necklace, offer a tangible reminder of the commitment and add to the power of the ceremony.

- **Plan a sermon (or a series of sermons) on purity.** Obviously, this would require the cooperation of a church's pastor. Messages that come from the pulpit tend to carry a sense of importance and priority for a church's life. Pastors who are willing to affirm God's plan for purity in their sermons have the potential to speak life into the members of a congregation—whether adolescent or adult, single or married. For example, a pastor might consider a four-week series that included sermons on these topics:

- **Week 1:** The Plan for Purity (God created us to be pure and in relationship with



Him. Even after the fall, His desire remains unchanged.)

- **Week 2:** The Teachers of Purity (Defining the roles of parents as the primary teachers of their children and the church as a support system for the home.)

- **Week 3:** The Obstacles to Purity (What are some things in culture that sidetrack us from purity and how do believers avoid them?)

- **Week 4:** The Restoration of Purity (How believers can find forgiveness if they have fallen short of God's design for purity.)

Each of these categories is painted in broad strokes. Churches should be encouraged to add their own creativity to meet the needs of its particular context. The idea is not that everyone does the same thing, but for everyone to do something.

The message of abstinence is too vital to ignore. Churches need to take advantage of the opportunities February provides—and build on those opportunities throughout the year.

Although only 13% of teens have ever had vaginal sex by age 15, sexual activity is common by the late teen years. By their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, seven in 10 teens of both sexes have had intercourse.

*Feel free to share this update with those in your ministry networks.*