



Hope and Redemption in Christ

We can always have hope because the greatest attribute of God is His boundless mercy. Our Heavenly Father sent Jesus to offer everyone victory and freedom. This is “good news” that needs to be passed on. Many teens today need hope and healing because they carry hidden emotional wounds that weigh down their hearts. Despite the fact that the media portrays teen sex as being without regrets, a survey of one thousand sexually active teens across America revealed that two-thirds of them wish they had waited longer to have sex (77% of girls and 60% of boys).

The gift of sexuality can so often be misused, which leads to many young people struggling with a variety of ills: self-hatred; memories of abuse; sexual addictions; guilt; insecurity.

Amidst this dysfunction and misery, God is able to bring healing and restoration. When we return to God, after straying from His loving plan for human sexuality, He not only forgives our sins, He offers us a new heart. Jesus did *not* come to simply redeem our souls and then leave us with a bunch of coping mechanisms to battle sexual temptation. Thankfully, He came to redeem every part of us, including our bodies and desires.

Christ came to offer everyone victory and freedom. Sadly, instead of claiming this victory, teenagers often claim that purity is too difficult. By doing this, they empty Jesus’ death on the Cross of its power and meaning. They reduce redemption to some quaint religious idea that sounds good but has no real power to change them, and thus they miss out on its life-changing effects.

Becoming a New Creation

Each of us must realize that purity is a gift from God and that He will give it to those who ask for it. The ideal place to strengthen the gift of purity is the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

We may avoid confession out of fear or embarrassment. Jesus instituted the Sacrament of Reconciliation because He knew we would all need it. To cast this Sacrament aside would be like a child who cannot swim throwing off a life preserver. This Sacrament is essential because through confession, we are made new, both in body and soul.

It is important to recognize that God is always ready to forgive us, no matter what we have done. Ask your teen about the incredible story of St. Mary of Egypt, on page 78 of their student workbook. Read it if you can.

Questions to engage with your son/daughter

1. How do you feel before going to confession? How do you feel after going to confession?
2. Do you have any suggestions on how our family could better show love when one of us fails?