

# Session VA: Manhood

Note: For boys only (teach as separate session for boys while girls learn Modesty session).

**Materials:** Materials: Flipchart; overhead of Negative/Positive worksheet; Be a Man bookmarks

Before session begins, write the following on the board or flipchart: thoughts lead to actions, actions lead to habits, habits lead to lifestyle, lifestyle leads to destiny.

## I. Review of definitions:

Write the fill-in statements below on the flipchart (or board). Ask students to fill in the blanks. Tell students not to open their workbooks – to try to do it from memory.

Chastity: F \_\_\_\_\_ from all s \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_  
before m \_\_\_\_\_ and fidelity after m \_\_\_\_\_.

## II. Manhood

Refer students to Manhood definition found on page 15 of the HIS Student Workbook. Read definition aloud: **Manhood: the qualities of a virtuous man.** Tell students that in order to become a real, true man—a man of virtue, certain qualities are important. What you think of yourself determines how you behave and who you are.

Refer students to *Qualities of a Virtuous Man* on page 15 of the HIS Student Workbook and have the boys read aloud the four qualities. If a boy sees himself this way as a boy becoming a man, then his thoughts will lead him to act this way towards a girl/woman. This act or behavior will lead him to continually treat girls/women this way becoming a habit for him. This habit, of continually treating women in a respectful way, will lead him to become known as this type of person—it will be his lifestyle. With this type of lifestyle, his destiny will be to end up married to a woman of similar character, raising children of character.

## III. Application

Refer students to *Manhood/Positive & Negative* worksheet found on page 16 of HIS Student Workbook. Each quality of a virtuous man has a negative side—the negative is that of a dog, the positive is that of a true man. Suggest to students that much of the behavior displayed in our culture related to sexual activity has been reduced to being similar to animal instincts, not of one who truly considers the well-being of another. Tell students that people are more than our feelings or hungers, and are above the instinctive behaviors of animals. We are intellectual beings, we have the minds which enable us to make the right choices.

Write these four words in the negative column for each quality—explain one by one. Ask students if they

have seen these behaviors:

Physically strong	abusive
Protector	possessive
Strength of mind	tricky
Provider	taker

When a man chooses not to be a man, he may behave in these ways.

When a man chooses to be a man and not a dog, he behaves in these ways.

Write the following words in the positive column, each time crossing out the negative word first.

Again, explain one by one.

Physically strong	helpful
Protector	protective
Strength of mind	respectful
Provider	giver

Ask students if they have seen these behaviors. Emphasize the positive examples given.

For Provider, share the following: as a man that makes sure the girl/woman has what she needs, one of the consequences of having children before marriage is child support. This is very serious. Ask how many students are aware of men who have gone to jail for child support. A man can lose a good job because of failure to pay child support or for falling behind in payments. Emphasize that this is totally preventable, not by using condoms, but by being chaste/abstinent—the only certain way to avoid pregnancy before marriage. A wise old, Black man, if he was in this class right now, would say to all of you boys growing into manhood just what he says to every young man he meets—“Don’t do the do if you can’t pay the due!”

Tell students that you have observed that boys and girls actually call each other dogs and female dogs. How does a female dog act? Generally female dogs allow the male to mount them/get on top of them, do their business, and leave. Some girls appear to act as if they want this. Refer to definition of Modesty—the quality which leads people to avoid sexual displays. Modesty seems to be played out these days. Because we expose ourselves so much now, it’s harder to be private and say no, for boys as well as girls. But girls are the greatest victims. How? Possible answers: rape, date rape, molestation, stares, teasing, bad talk or gossip, considered easy/looking for sex, appear older. How can men change this? Allow response; refer back to positive qualities of manhood discussed earlier. Generally, what you call yourself is what you become or act like. Don’t let this dog label fit you. Choose to be different, radical for what is right and not what is violent and disrespectful. Remember, when you treat a girl bad, that is someone’s sister or future mother, or some guy is treating your sister or mother or another girl you know just as bad. When a boy growing into a man develops these qualities, he’s seen as a man of character, integrity, and respect. These are qualities every one admires. In order to be a real man, a man of virtue or truth, you have to



be strong, believe in yourself, and respect others. This prepares you to deal with opposition. Distribute bookmarks as a reminder to “Be a strong man.”

As appropriate, refer to or read “Like a Virgin” article as an example of men who choose to live chaste—free from sexual activity before marriage and faithful after marriage. Distribute copies to boys as appropriate for the particular age and maturity of the group.

**IV. Homework**

What is your model of a man? What have you seen, heard, been taught? Consider your roots, your family tree. If you don’t know your history, it will be repeated. When you know it, you have a choice. Know your roots and know that you have the power to break off—honoring our elders is something we value, but it does not mean following in their footsteps when their course is a destructive one. Some things follow the family from generation to generation like alcoholism, abuse, poverty—no one makes the change, the behavior continues. But taking time out to think about our heritage can make a big difference. There may be members in your family tree that led productive lives. Take time to find out and determine what course you will take. You have choices, desire to be a healthy person of virtue.

	<b>NEGATIVE</b>	<b>POSITIVE</b>
<b>A. Physically stronger</b>	<b>Abusive</b>	<b>Helpful</b>
	Try to force a girl to do what you want	Behave like a big brother, offer to help
<b>B. Protector</b>	<b>Possessive</b>	<b>Protective</b>
	Jealous, don’t want to see the girl you like with anyone else, mean to others, possessive	Want to make sure the girl is safe and does not feel threatened, watch out for her
<b>C. Strength of mind</b> <i>—use of mind and intelligence</i>	<b>Tricky</b>	<b>Respectful</b>
	Try to trick girls to get them to do what you want, use them	Use self-control, know your limits, already have set in your mind that you will respect girls, see them as sisters
<b>D. Provider</b>	<b>Taker</b>	<b>Giver</b>
	Expect to be provided for, the girl takes care of the boy	Desires to give, to make sure the girl has what she needs



**The qualities of a virtuous man.**



**PHYSICALLY STRONG**



**PROVIDER**



**PROTECTOR**

**STRENGTH OF MIND**





POSITIVE



NEGATIVE

PHYSICALLY STRONG

PROVIDER

PROTECTOR

STRENGTH OF MIND



Derek believes he's worth the wait.

on his mind

# Like a Virgin

In a world full of sexual temptation, this 36-year-old college professor believes abstinence has been one of the best lessons he's learned

BY DEREK WESTBROOK  
AS TOLD TO AKIBA SOLOMON

"Get married before you have sex." That's the only message my parents ever passed along to me about physical relationships, and it came straight from the church. I was raised in a very religious household in Rome, New York. We were the only African-American family in this small town, but the nearby Pentecostal church we attended was all Black and very old-school: Kids weren't supposed to see movies or dance, women were discouraged from wearing pants, and my older siblings and I were in church four days a week.

Granted, all the kids at church sneaked kisses. But I was a late bloomer. I had my first kiss at 16. My girlfriend and I would hold clammy hands, talk on the phone all night, and cuddle at my house after school. But that was it. Because I was into religion—and she wasn't—we split up after two months.

The breakup happened right before I went off to college and caused me to start challenging what I learned in church. I was excited about going to school with a lot of Black people and meeting so many sisters. I felt this was my time to experiment—to talk to them and see, well, what else could happen. I wanted to have sex, but I felt guilty about going against my religion. So I negotiated around what I was taught: I gave and received oral sex, fondled and petted. As long as it wasn't intercourse, I told myself it was cool.

And my male friends never pressured me about having sex. Mostly because they just assumed I was doing it anyway. I was relatively popular, had plenty of female friends and actively pursued the company of sisters. Girls trusted me and believed I wasn't trying to use them. Most people respected my decision to remain a virgin, even if they didn't agree with it.

I remember an incident with this one sister. We were lying in bed, fooling around with our shirts off when she stopped and asked, "What are we going to do after this?" I responded, "Hey, I'm not looking for a relationship.

If you don't want to have sex, that's fine." It ended right there.

By my midtwenties, after more than a handful of near misses, I had to ask myself if I was committed to staying a virgin. I arrived at a point where I was able to have an honest conversation about what I wanted—not because I was feeling guilty, or because of what my parents said, or even because of what the Bible said. I realized that I want a long-term, committed relationship with someone who's going to be my wife. And I want her to be my first.

At 26 I started wearing a promise ring—a gold band on my left ring finger—to symbolize my virginity. When people assume I'm married, I tell them I'm not and explain that the ring also represents my relationship to the Creator. When I'm ready to move into family mode, I'll replace it with a wedding band and give the promise ring to my wife. And that sister doesn't have to be a virgin in the technical sense, because once people commit themselves to God, the past doesn't matter.

But I'll admit that I do have desires—I'm not immune to lust. I just channel that energy into other things. I haven't even had to masturbate in years because to me it's like hitting a crack pipe: There's this intense feeling of desire followed by

emptiness. Now I'm more into intimacy. I can wait for the sexuality. I actually think it makes me more creative. I love poetry, music, walks, just finding different ways to show I care without having to go into that realm—which is appreciated by the very beautiful woman I've been dating for more than eight months. She's a virgin, too. We met on a Web site for Black Christians. Things really seem to be going well, and I'm keeping my fingers crossed. After all, I've gotten this far by faith.

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