

PURITY, CELIBACY, AND ABSTINENCE

Understanding Purity, Celibacy, and Abstinence

Purity is often reduced to sexual abstinence or celibacy, but biblical purity reaches much deeper. Choosing celibacy and sexual abstinence has become an important part of my obedience to God. Purity, however, is not only about what we do or do not do physically. It is the surrender of our bodies, minds, hearts, motives, desires, relationships, and private lives to Him.

Purity is not about appearing perfect, following a set of religious rules, or pretending temptation does not exist. It is about allowing God to cleanse what has been compromised, heal what has been wounded, and bring every area of our lives into alignment with Him.

Celibacy is the committed choice to remain unmarried and sexually abstinent, either for a season or as a lifelong calling. Sexual abstinence is the practice of refraining from sexual activity. For me, both have become expressions of obedience to God. Neither, however, is the full measure of purity, which reaches into the surrender of the whole person.

Choosing celibacy was not simply about refusing sex. It was about removing the distractions and unhealthy attachments that had repeatedly pulled me away from God. It created room for healing, strengthened my discernment, protected my calling, and allowed me to focus more fully on the ministry God had entrusted to me without continuing to form physical, emotional, or spiritual ties with men outside of His will.

Purity is not punishment. It is not God withholding love, intimacy, pleasure, or companionship from us. Purity is protection. It guards our hearts, preserves our discernment, strengthens our relationship with God, and creates space for healing that cannot happen while we continue returning to the same patterns that wounded us. For much of my life, I did not understand that.

Stepping into Purity, Celibacy, and Abstinence

When I surrendered my life to Jesus in December 2020, I did not yet understand everything He would ask me to surrender. I knew my life had to change, but I was still learning what obedience looked like in the everyday areas of my life, especially in relationships, sexuality, validation, and the way I had learned to seek love.

In 2021, God began calling me into purity, celibacy, and abstinence. This was not simply a decision to stop having sex. It was an invitation to step out of an entire way of living.

I had spent years looking for affection, comfort, affirmation, identity, and security in places that could never truly provide them. Sexual relationships and attention from men had become

intertwined with my need to feel wanted, chosen, attractive, and loved. God was not merely asking me to change my behavior. He was exposing what had been driving it.

At first, celibacy could easily have felt like restriction. The world presents sexual freedom as empowerment and self-denial as repression. It tells us that following our desires is authentic, that physical intimacy does not have to carry spiritual or emotional consequences, and that boundaries prevent us from experiencing life fully.

God began showing me the opposite. What I had once viewed as freedom had often kept me bound, while what I feared would feel restrictive became a place of protection. Celibacy gave God room to uncover wounds I had avoided, detach me from unhealthy patterns, and teach me that I did not need sexual attention to prove my worth.

I began to understand that God was not taking something precious away from me. He was rescuing something precious within me. He was teaching me that my body was not an object to use for acceptance, a bargaining tool for affection, or a way to keep someone interested. My body belonged to Him. My heart belonged to Him. My sexuality belonged to Him. Because I belonged to Him, every part of me mattered.

Stepping into purity did not mean every desire immediately disappeared or that temptation was suddenly removed. In fact, a few men I had previously dated started reaching out again, and I had a decision to make. Part of me wondered what difference it would make, since I had already been intimate with them. But it did matter. When I told them about my decision, I was met with congratulations rather than judgment. I was grateful for their response. Their kindness did not make the boundary unnecessary. These men had also become friends, but continuing to spend time with them placed me too close to old patterns and temptation.

Choosing purity meant I had made a decision about who would govern my desires. My feelings would no longer be my authority. My loneliness would no longer make my decisions. My need for validation would no longer determine who received access to me. Jesus would.

Purity became part of my surrender. It was not something I achieved through willpower, but something God began forming in me through obedience, conviction, healing, and the renewing of my mind.

When Men Became Trophies

There was a time in my life when men had become trophies to me.

With every new sexual encounter, I felt a false sense of accomplishment. I even kept a list.

At the time, each name felt like proof that I was desirable, wanted, seen, or somehow winning. I treated each encounter as though it added something to my value. What I mistook for confidence

and empowerment was really evidence of how deeply I had learned to measure my worth through attention, pursuit, and validation.

The list gave me the illusion that I was gaining something, but each encounter was taking something from me.

I was reducing people to achievements while also allowing my own body and heart to be treated as though they carried no sacred value. I was collecting names while losing pieces of myself.

God eventually showed me that people are not trophies, sexual encounters are not accomplishments, and being desired is not proof of my value. My worth was never determined by how many men wanted access to me. It had already been established by the One who created me, loved me, and paid the highest price to redeem me.

Addicted to Feeling Wanted

There was sexual addiction present in my life, but when I look back, I can see that I was even more addicted to the feeling of being wanted. I was addicted to being noticed, chosen, desired, and given the temporary reassurance that I mattered.

Sex became one of the ways I accessed that feeling, but the deeper hunger underneath it was emotional. I wanted proof that I was attractive, powerful, significant, and impossible to ignore. Every new encounter gave me a momentary sense of validation, but it never lasted. Once the attention faded, I was left needing to feel wanted again, and that was how the cycle continued.

What appeared to be sexual freedom was actually dependence on external validation. I was using intimacy to soothe wounds that intimacy could not heal. I was looking to men to confirm an identity that could only become secure in Christ.

Being wanted is not the same as being loved. Being desired is not the same as being valued. Being seen by men could never replace being fully known by God.

Using Sex to Regain Control

Sex became more than a source of validation in my life. It also became a weapon.

At times, I used sex to gain attention, hold power, create attachment, keep someone interested, prove that I was desirable, or regain a sense of control. Sex became one of the ways I tried to reclaim control where I had once lost it.

In areas of my life where I had felt powerless, violated, rejected, overlooked, or emotionally unsafe, sexuality gave me a temporary sense of authority. If I could make someone want me, pursue me, or become attached to me, then I felt as though I was the one in control.

It was not true control. It was a wounded response to powerlessness.

I was trying to reclaim through sex what had been taken from me through trauma, rejection, and broken relationships. I used desire as a shield, a weapon, and a way to make sure I was never the one left feeling small again. When I felt powerless emotionally, sexuality could make me feel powerful physically. I could draw someone in while still keeping the deeper parts of myself guarded.

What looked like confidence was often self-protection. What looked like control was often fear. What looked like empowerment was often a wounded attempt to avoid rejection.

Sex could make me feel in control of a moment, but it could not heal the part of me that feared being unseen, unwanted, abandoned, or unworthy of love. The power was temporary. Once the attention faded, the deeper emptiness remained.

I secretly enjoyed deciding that each encounter would be one-and-done. When the men tried to see me again, I had no intention of doing so, and refusing them made me feel even more powerful. Some reached out years later, and I could hardly believe that one night had left such a lasting impression when there were so many other women they could pursue. Yet I had made it my mission to give them everything they wanted, even when doing so made me uncomfortable. I wanted to be the “best” they had ever encountered so that, when they came back for more, I could take the driver’s seat and refuse them.

Even writing this makes me squirm. It reveals how deeply wounded I was and how distorted my thinking had become. I remained outwardly polite, but beneath that politeness was a fierce determination to hold the power.

God eventually showed me that control gained through sexuality was only another form of bondage. Real freedom would not come from making other people desire me. It would come from allowing Him to heal the places where I had first learned to feel powerless.

Lust, Seduction, and Spiritual Bondage

Looking back at the years before my surrender and the early stages of my healing, I believe spirits of lust and seduction had gained influence in my life through my wounds, choices, and repeated agreement with sexual sin. I was not only being drawn toward lust. I was also projecting it through the way I carried myself, sought attention, used sexuality, and measured my worth through desire.

Many of the men I pursued were former or active-duty military personnel or MMA fighters. I was drawn to their toughness, intensity, and overt masculinity. Qualities that might have intimidated others ignited something in me. The tougher they appeared, the more attracted I became.

Lust attracted lust, seduction attracted seduction, and wounded people kept finding one another through the very areas that still needed healing.

At the time, I often interpreted that attention as chemistry, power, desirability, or connection. Spiritually, however, I now see that I was participating in patterns that kept me bound and distracted from God. The enemy could use those encounters to reinforce a false identity, create

unhealthy attachments, stir temptation, and keep me focused on being desired rather than becoming whole.

God did not expose this to condemn me. He exposed it so I could repent, renounce what I had partnered with, and allow Him to purify the places in me that had become entangled with lust, seduction, control, and the need for validation.

As God began changing what was within me, He also changed what I was willing to entertain around me.

When Relationships Become Distractions

One of the things God began showing me was how easily attraction, romantic attention, sexual relationships, and emotional entanglements could distract me from my calling.

Not every person who enters our life is sent by God, and not every connection is meant to be pursued. Not everyone who desires access to us should receive it. The enemy can exploit unhealed wounds through relationships that appeal directly to our loneliness, insecurity, desire for validation, or fear of being alone.

Someone can appear at exactly the moment we feel overlooked, discouraged, vulnerable, or uncertain. Their attention can feel like confirmation when it is actually a distraction. A relationship may seem exciting while slowly pulling us away from prayer, peace, discernment, purpose, and obedience.

Some connections cloud our discernment, awaken old patterns, weaken boundaries, and create emotional confusion. They consume time, focus, energy, and prayer. They can leave us physically, emotionally, and spiritually tied to people God never intended us to join ourselves to.

In fact, the Lord revealed to me more than once that, in some ways, He was keeping me “unseen” for my protection. During that season, I received very little male attention or direct messages from men, which I understood as part of a protective boundary against the seductive influences that had once found easy access to me.

Choosing celibacy created space for me to stop chasing validation through men and begin focusing more fully on God and the ministry He had entrusted to me. Without the constant distraction of romantic attention, sexual relationships, emotional entanglements, and the need to be desired, I could hear God more clearly.

I could focus, heal, and pray without constantly carrying the emotional weight of another unhealthy connection. I could serve without being pulled in two directions. I began to understand that protecting my calling sometimes required guarding access to my life. I did not want to become physically, emotionally, or spiritually tied to men outside of God’s will for my life.

Purity taught me that access to me is not automatic. My body is sacred, my heart must be guarded, and my calling matters. No relationship is worth sacrificing the peace, clarity, purpose, and intimacy with God that obedience has given me.

Purity Beyond the Body

Celibacy became an important part of my obedience to God, but purity is not simply the absence of sexual activity. Purity is the presence of wholehearted devotion to God.

A person can be physically celibate while continuing to entertain lust, fantasy, emotional dependency, manipulation, impure motives, or unhealthy attachments. It is possible to stop sleeping with people while still allowing compromise to live in the mind. It is possible to maintain physical boundaries while secretly feeding emotional entanglements. It is possible to appear modest outwardly while continuing to seek attention inwardly.

Purity reaches beyond the body. It includes our thoughts, motives, conversations, private messages, entertainment, relationships, clothing, boundaries, fantasies, intentions, and willingness to obey God when nobody else is watching.

Jesus addressed the heart because the heart is where compromise begins.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”

Matthew 5:8

Purity of heart does not mean perfection. It means sincerity, integrity, and a life that is no longer divided between what we claim to believe and what we secretly choose. God is not merely concerned with appearances. He desires truth in the inward parts, and He wants every part of us.

My Body Belongs to God

One of the greatest changes in my understanding came when I began to see that my body was not merely mine to use however I pleased. My body belonged to God.

That truth can sound restrictive until we understand the love behind it. God created my body, knows what harms it, understands what bonds the soul, and knows what memories remain after people leave. He knows the spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical consequences of sexual sin. He knows the weight of carrying connections that were never meant to become covenants.

When I began to understand this, it changed the way I viewed obedience. Honoring God with my body was not about shame. It was worship. It was a way of saying, “Lord, You gave Yourself completely for me, and I now give myself completely to You.”

Purity became less about what I was not allowed to do and more about who I belonged to. I belonged to Jesus.

That meant my body was no longer available to every person who desired it. My attention was no longer available to anyone who demanded it. My emotions were no longer available for every unhealthy attachment, and my vulnerability was no longer something people had the right to exploit.

My body was not an object, a form of currency, a tool for validation, proof of love, or something I had to offer in order to keep someone interested. My body was a temple of the Holy Spirit, and temples are sacred.

“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.”

1 Corinthians 6:19–20

The Spiritual Weight of Sexual Sin

The world often reduces sex to a physical act between consenting adults, but Scripture reveals that sexual intimacy carries spiritual weight.

“The two will become one flesh.”

1 Corinthians 6:16

Sex was designed by God to unite two people within the safety, commitment, and covenant of marriage. When it is separated from covenant, it can create attachment without security, intimacy without responsibility, and vulnerability without protection.

This does not mean every person will experience the consequences in exactly the same way, but it does mean sex is never as casual as the world claims. Our bodies may move on before our souls do. We may convince ourselves that something meant nothing while still carrying the memory, comparison, rejection, longing, shame, or attachment long afterward.

Sexual compromise can affect how we see ourselves, distort our understanding of love, weaken our boundaries, and create emotional and spiritual confusion. It can open the door to cycles of lust, secrecy, fantasy, pornography, unhealthy relationships, and self-rejection.

Some of these issues overlap with addiction, and I address the compulsive patterns and bondage more fully elsewhere in this book. This chapter is not only about escaping a destructive cycle. It is about becoming wholly devoted to Christ.

The goal of purity is not merely to stop doing something. The goal is to become more like Jesus.

Shame, Conviction, and Repentance

When God began confronting areas of impurity in my life, the enemy tried to use my past against me. Shame told me that I was dirty, ruined, disqualified, and too far gone. It told me that no godly person would ever want me and that I had no right to speak about purity because of what I had done.

Conviction sounded different. Conviction told me that my past was no longer my identity, that I had been created for more, and that it was time to bring hidden things into the light. Shame pushed me away from God, but conviction drew me back to Him.

The Holy Spirit does not expose sin to humiliate us. He reveals it so He can heal us. God does not ask us to confess because He wants to hold our failures over us. He asks us to confess because secrecy keeps us bound.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

1 John 1:9

The blood of Jesus is stronger than our past. There is no sexual history, impure thought life, pornographic addiction, promiscuous lifestyle, emotional entanglement, or hidden compromise that Jesus cannot forgive.

Repentance is not merely feeling sorry. It is a change of mind that produces a change of direction. It is agreeing with God and refusing to continue calling bondage freedom. It is deciding that temporary pleasure is no longer worth sacrificing His presence. Purity began when I stopped negotiating with God.

Renewing the Mind

One of the greatest battles in purity takes place in the mind. We live in a world saturated with sexual imagery, suggestive entertainment, pornography, provocative advertising, casual hookups, and messages telling us that desire should never be denied.

We are taught that restraint is repression, boundaries are insecurity, and sexual expression is essential to identity.

God did not merely want to change my outward behavior. He wanted to change the way I thought. He began showing me what I was consuming, normalizing, fantasizing about, and allowing to remain unchallenged in my mind.

Not every thought that enters our mind is chosen, but what we entertain matters. A thought may arrive uninvited, but we do not have to give it somewhere to live.

Purity required me to become more intentional about what I watched, listened to, read, imagined, and revisited. It required me to stop feeding the very things I was asking God to remove. We cannot

continually consume lust and expect our minds to remain pure. We cannot repeatedly entertain fantasy and then wonder why temptation feels so strong.

Renewal requires replacement. We do not only remove what is impure. We fill our minds with what is true, honorable, righteous, pure, lovely, and worthy of praise.

“Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things.”

Philippians 4:8

Purity of mind is not achieved through denial. It grows through discipline, truth, prayer, Scripture, and surrender.

Boundaries Protect the Calling

Before God began healing me, I often viewed boundaries as rejection. I thought saying no might cause someone to leave, that limits would make me less desirable, and that I had to give access in order to maintain a connection. I wanted acceptance so desperately that I sometimes put my life in danger simply to appease a man.

God taught me that healthy boundaries do not prevent love. They reveal whether love is genuine.

A person who truly respects us will not pressure us to violate our convictions. Someone sent by God will not require us to disobey God in order to keep them. Boundaries protect our bodies, hearts, minds, time, peace, and calling.

Boundaries also expose motives. They slow down unhealthy intensity, create room for discernment, and help us distinguish between someone who values us and someone who only wants access to us. Purity taught me that saying no is not cruelty, walking away is not failure, blocking access is not unforgiveness, and removing myself from temptation is not weakness. Sometimes the most obedient thing we can do is leave.

Modesty Without Legalism

Purity also began changing the way I thought about modesty. Modesty is not about hiding our bodies because our bodies are shameful. Our bodies are God’s creation. Modesty is about honoring what is sacred.

It is possible to dress modestly while still craving attention, just as it is possible to focus so heavily on outward appearance that we become judgmental, prideful, or legalistic. God sees the heart, which means the question is not simply, “How much of my body can I show?”

The deeper questions are, “What am I trying to communicate? What response am I trying to create? Am I presenting myself from freedom, insecurity, rebellion, validation, performance, or worship?”

Purity requires honesty about motive. For me, modesty became less about rules and more about alignment. I wanted the way I presented myself to support the testimony I claimed to carry. I wanted people to see Christ in me rather than a body seeking validation through attention. This required years of sanctification and learning, especially because I was often judged harshly for my appearance both on and off stage.

That did not mean erasing personality, beauty, style, femininity, or confidence. It meant no longer using my appearance as a weapon, a hook, or a source of identity. True confidence does not need to provoke desire in order to feel valuable.

Purity Is Not Merely Preparation for Marriage

Purity is often presented mainly as preparation for a future spouse. Marriage may be part of God’s plan for some people, but marriage is not the reward for purity. Jesus is.

We do not pursue purity simply so God will send us a husband or wife. We pursue purity because we belong to Him. Marriage cannot become another idol attached to obedience.

A person can remain pure and still wait longer than expected. A person can obey God and still experience loneliness. A person can honor God and still not receive the relationship they hoped for. Purity must remain rooted in devotion to Christ, not in a transaction with Him.

I am not celibate because I believe God owes me a husband. I am celibate because my life belongs to Jesus.

Any future relationship must come under His authority. It must support my calling, honor my boundaries, protect my relationship with God, and reflect His character. Until then, obedience is not an empty waiting room. It is a full life with God.

Purity After Sexual Brokenness

One of the enemy’s greatest lies is that a complicated sexual history places purity out of reach. That is simply not true.

Sexual abuse is never the victim’s sin, and being violated does not make a person impure. The shame belongs to the person who committed the abuse, not to the person who endured it.

Purity is not synonymous with virginity, nor is it dependent upon having an untouched history.

Our past may explain where we have been, but it does not have the authority to define where God is taking us. We may carry consequences. We may need deep healing. We may have to rebuild trust, renew our minds, break patterns, and learn boundaries that were never modeled for us. None of that means we are disqualified.

Where there has been sin, Jesus offers complete forgiveness; where there has been trauma, He offers healing and restoration. He does not forgive us while secretly continuing to call us dirty.

When He cleanses us, we are clean. When He redeems us, we are redeemed. When He gives us a new identity, we do not have to keep introducing ourselves by our old one.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”
2 Corinthians 5:17

My history does not prevent me from speaking about purity. It is part of why I must.

I know what counterfeit freedom feels like. I know what it is to confuse desire with love, control with empowerment, and attention with worth. I also know what it is to be met by Jesus in the middle of that brokenness and invited into something better.

From Restriction to Freedom

What once looked like restriction became one of the greatest freedoms God has given me.

Purity gave me clarity, peace, stronger discernment, and freedom from the constant need to be chosen by men. It helped me recognize patterns I once called chemistry and allowed me to stop forming attachments with people who were not aligned with God’s will for my life.

Purity gave me space to heal. It protected my ministry, taught me to value my body, and showed me that loneliness does not have to become compromise. It taught me that desire does not have to become disobedience and that I can be fully feminine, confident, expressive, and alive without offering sexual access to prove my worth.

Purity has not made my life smaller. It has made my life clearer.

God did not call me into purity because He wanted to deprive me. He called me into purity because He loved me too much to leave me in bondage. What I once feared would feel like loss became protection. What I thought would feel empty became intimate. What I believed would make me powerless became the place where God restored true authority.

I no longer need to use sex as a weapon, collect men as trophies, keep a list to prove I have been wanted, or gather attention in order to feel seen.

I am seen by God. I am known by God. I am loved by God. That is not a consolation prize. It is the foundation of my freedom.

Reflection

Purity is not about pretending the past did not happen. It is about refusing to let the past continue governing the present. It is not achieved by shame, fear, image management, or religious performance. It grows through surrender.

Have you confused being wanted with being loved? Have you used sexuality, appearance, attention, fantasy, or relationships to gain validation or control? Are there people, habits, conversations, private messages, or forms of entertainment that continue pulling you away from God? Have you remained physically abstinent while feeding emotional or mental compromise?

Do you believe purity is still available to you?

Jesus is not asking you to clean yourself before approaching Him. He is asking you to come into the light. Purity begins with honesty, grows through repentance, is strengthened through boundaries, protected through obedience, and sustained through intimacy with Christ.

Prayer

Father, I surrender my body, mind, heart, desires, relationships, motives, memories, and future to You.

Forgive me for every way I have used sexuality, attention, relationships, fantasy, or appearance outside of Your design. Forgive me for seeking validation from people, using sex as a weapon, treating people as trophies, or trying to regain control through being wanted and desired.

I repent of every agreement I have made with lust, seduction, impurity, shame, control, and counterfeit love. In the name of Jesus, I renounce every ungodly attachment, unhealthy emotional bond, pattern of sexual sin, and influence that has distracted me from You.

Cleanse my mind, heal my heart, and restore my identity. Help me recognize distraction before it becomes attachment, and give me the strength to walk away from anything that threatens my purity, peace, calling, or relationship with You.

Teach me modesty without shame, confidence without seduction, boundaries without fear, and obedience without resentment. Thank You that my past does not disqualify me and that the blood of Jesus is enough to cleanse, redeem, and make me new.

I choose to honor You with my body, my thoughts, my relationships, and my life. I belong to You.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

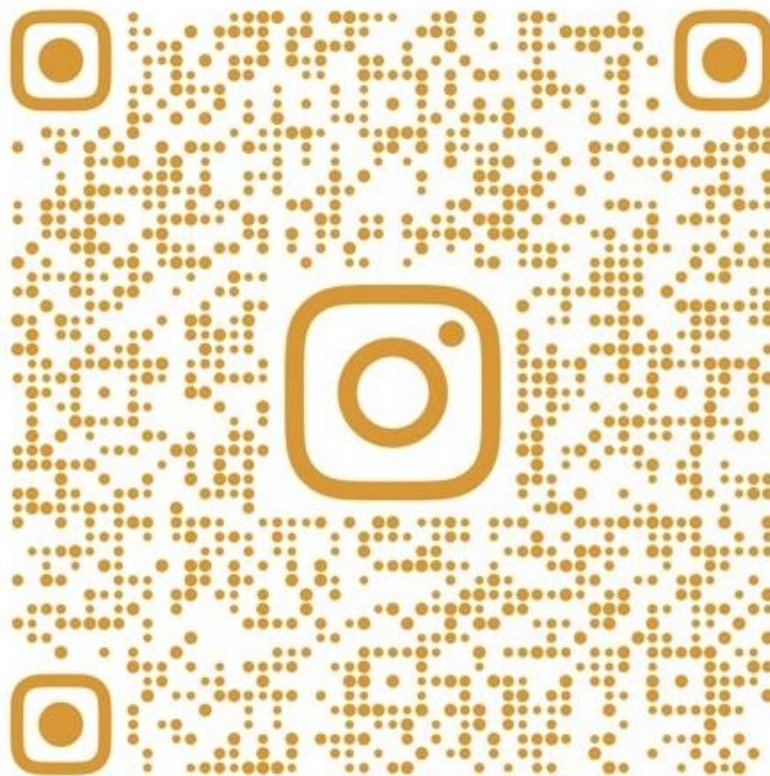
Purity Is Love Ministry

As God deepened my understanding of purity, He gave me the revelation and vision to establish **Purity Is Love Ministry**, along with its name and direction. What began as a deeply personal

journey of celibacy, abstinence, healing, and obedience has become something I now feel called to share with others.

The heart of Purity Is Love Ministry is to help people understand that purity is not shame, punishment, or rejection. It is love, protection, surrender, and freedom in Christ. I am stepping out in obedience, sharing what God has taught me, and trusting Him with what comes next. I do not yet know everything this ministry will become, but I am excited to see where God takes it.

For continued encouragement, teaching, and resources on purity, celibacy, and abstinence, follow **@purityisloveministry on Instagram** and visit **ClareCunninghamMusic.com** for additional resources.



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