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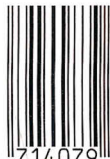
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# Why Adults In 30s And 40s Are Choosing To Abstain From Sex

By Frances Moffett  
JET MAGAZINE

**P**amela Shine, a woman in her forties, says she has never had sex. She decided in her late teens to abstain until marriage. "Through the *Bible* and my relationship with God, I found that sex was a gift to marriage," she says. "I decided to be obedient to what He had to say, not what I felt."

Shine is of a "select few." She is one of the 11 percent of never-married adults who abstain from sexual intercourse, according to a recent survey from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS).

Dr. Gail E. Wyatt, a sex therapist and psychiatry professor at UCLA, says that religious beliefs, number of available partners and health concerns are some of the reasons why adults are celibate. "There are many reasons why abstinence is appropriate for people who've never had sex, even in their thirties," she says.

Shine says she has seen others risk their lives for sex. "With my occupation as a preplanning counselor at a cemetery, I see people putting their lives on the line every day, just to be sexually active," she explains. "They feel that things like HIV/AIDS won't happen to them, but it does."

This made the former model and Chicago native commit to her choice, she

Pamela Shine, a preplanning counselor at a cemetery, says that she is committed to her decision to remain abstinent until marriage.



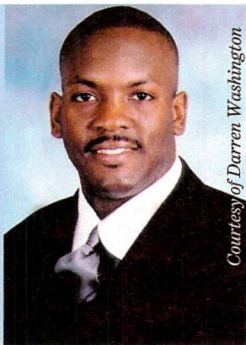
says, and "stay prayed up." Though there were plenty of opportunities for sex, she says she has never even seen a naked man. Shine says that she doesn't put herself in situations that could possibly lead to sex.

"I wasn't trying to go through the fire to see if I would get burned," she says. "I trusted there were people that were burned up, and I saw it."

Although she doesn't date often now, Shine says that men usually lose interest when they find she is a virgin because it forces them to consider if they are ready to settle down or not. She also believes the desire to have sex is the strongest force on earth and knows that if she wasn't a Christian, she would have taken her



Darren Washington wrote a book, *A Dummy's Guide to Sexual Abstinence*, giving advice on how to actively abstain from premarital sex.



Courtesy of Darren Washington

chances with it long ago.

Not everyone makes the decision to preserve her or his virginity, though. According to NCHS, 96 percent of American adults have had sex. Twenty-eight percent of African-Americans first had sex before age 15, the highest percentage among adults. But it seems that some adults as they get older are making the choice to abstain.

Darren Washington chose to be celibate when he was 24 after focusing on his spirituality. "There was no more satisfaction," he says. "I thought it was a waste of time to have sex with someone I wasn't going to marry."

Thirteen years later, Washington, 37, sticks to his decision—though it hasn't been easy. "I've been in situations where I've come close, but I'm human," he explains. "I don't want people to think that I don't think about sex or I've never backtracked in my life. You can't come off like you're never tempted."

Though women have ended relationships with him because of his belief, Washington maintains that a successful courtship begins with friendship and having someone who is supportive. The

absence of sex, he says, helps prove if that person is marriage material or not. "You need to have a clear mind about that person's worth without getting bogged down with that smoke screen of sex," he says.

Washington, the president and founder of Urban Community Action Network in Gary, IN, says he wants to be married within a couple years; he's just waiting for that woman of God to come into his life.

Valerie Clayton, 52, became abstinent when she was 25 after hearing a sermon about abstinence. Clayton abstained for 14 years until she married her husband, Dr. Jerome Clayton, when she was 39. Clayton, a marketing director from Inglewood, CA, says before she married, she got discouraged about finding her mate.

"I figured that either you're going to be stuck in discouragement, which ultimately leads to bitterness, or you can brush yourself off and keep going," she says.

Valerie and Jerome Clayton, married 11 years, co-wrote *Victory in Singleness*, a book for the mature, single and celibate person, after not finding abstinence support for people their age.

Courtesy of Valerie and Jerome Clayton

