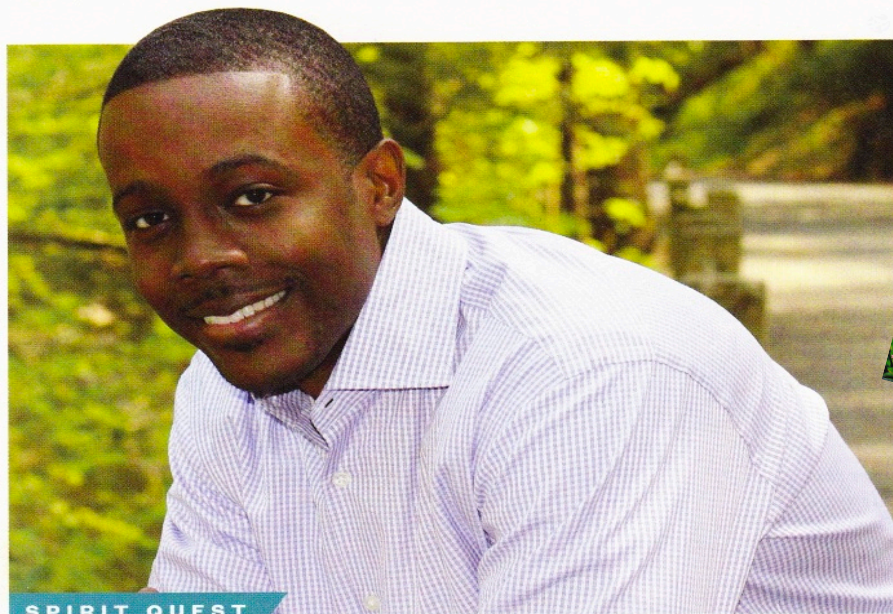


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SPRIT QUEST

Second Chance at Celibacy

ONE MAN'S PATH LEADS HIM FROM SEXUAL CONQUEST TO CHASTITY *As Told to MICHELLE BURFORD*

As a young man, Armond E. Mosley slept with his share of women. That was all before he took a vow of abstinence, a promise that transformed his Christian faith.

It was during my teen years that I first wrestled with the idea of sexual purity. In my hometown of Huntsville, Ala., my parents raised me in the Baptist church, where from the pulpit, I heard that God wants us to reserve sex for marriage. That biblical teaching sounded fine—until my hormones began raging during adolescence.

At 16, I had my first real girlfriend. By then, a lot of my friends claimed to be having sex, so I felt as if I was falling behind. Though I pushed the envelope with kissing and making out, somehow I made it through high school without actually having intercourse. That changed soon after I graduated as valedictorian.

The summer before college, I met a funny, smart, pretty girl at a party, and we fell for each other. She was a virgin. I lied and told her I wasn't because I thought she'd want to be with a man who was experienced. When we finally agreed to have sex, I immediately knew it was a mistake.

Soon thereafter, I began my freshman year at Howard University, a campus with far more females than males. Casual sex became

I want others who are struggling—especially men—to know that they're not alone.



sex and began again, a practice I did a few months later, I heard a whisper: "Be celibate for one year." I knew it was what I needed to hear.

I called two of my Christian friends and told them what I'd experienced. They admitted that they, too, wanted to get back in alignment with their faith, so we made a pact to recommit to abstinence and hold each other accountable. For 18 months, I was celibate—and began to wear my abstinence as a badge of pride rather than a journey of humility.

In 2006, I hit a low point. As the housing market deteriorated, my real estate business spiraled into bankruptcy. I was ticked off with God. In my immaturity, I thought, "How could You do this to me after I gave you 18 months?" I now know God was using the experience to bring me back to Him.

At church one Sunday, the minister said, "God sometimes gets our attention by conviction, confrontation and constriction." I joined the congregation that day. I knew God was calling me into a new place in my relationship with Him that involved living my life His way.

In January 2007, I rededicated my life to Christ, promising to wait until marriage to have sex. The distance I'd felt from God was replaced with a deep sense of connection to Him.

One of the Christian friends who supported me is now my wife. During the 18 months that Nneka and I dated, we were committed to sexual purity. We were physically affectionate, of course, but we kept our promise to God. This strengthened our relationship—and made our wedding night unforgettable.

I misstepped many times on my way back to God and, even now, struggle to abide by His principles. But as I've stumbled, I've shared my story. In our culture, masculinity is often defined as sexual prowess. How does the Christian man

balance that definition with the Lord's command? It's not easy, but it is possible. By God's grace, my wife and I discovered that.

Armond E. Mosley, 30, is the author of Rededication: A Story of Sex, Repentance, and Restoration. He and Nneka live near Philadelphia.