

CHRISTIAN AND LOVING IT!

Holiday Issue

Welcome to our CALI Holiday Issue! As Thanksgiving and Christmas approach, we want our readers to know how much we appreciate the opportunity to minister to each and every one of you through our articles. There is a mandate on our lives to share the gospel and we pray that through our truthfulness and transparency we do just that.

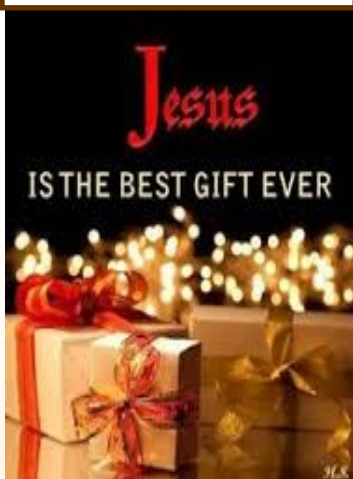
We are thankful for you who take the time to read what God has placed on our hearts. But more importantly we thank God for Jesus. He is the greatest gift of all. John 3:16 tells us that “God so loved the world that He gave his one and only son and whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” As we reflect on the real reasons why we celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas, we should come to a place of understanding and know that thanksgiving is an everyday ongoing expression we give to God in appreciation of his greatest gift to us—Christ. We were saved by grace because of this gift, and the best part is...it’s FREE to all who believe (Romans 10: 9). And not only do we have Christ, but we have eternal life, which is heaven.

Let these very truths be the foundation on which you build your holiday traditions. Give thanks in everything and remember “Jesus is the reason for the season.”

Blessings,
Cali Girls

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Jesus

IS THE BEST GIFT EVER



Gift Ideas for Christmas

Don’t know what to buy? Here are a few CALI Recommends that will keep money in your pocket and put smiles on the faces and memories in the hearts of those you love.

- Read the story/watch a movie** on the birth of Christ (Luke 2:1-20). And don’t forget the popcorn! It is so important that we understand the true meaning of the season. Your family will remember this quality time!
- Make gifts.** A personalized homemade gift means more than a store-brought gift. If you have little ones, making crafty gifts together is something you will all enjoy. Need some suggestions? Pinterest has tons of ideas for DIY gifts. Enjoy a project while listening to your favorite Christmas songs!
- Share a meal.** The smell of delicious food and homemade desserts are another thing people love about Christmas. Why not cook and bless someone with the gift of a hot meal and great company?
- Volunteer.** Shelters, food banks, and churches are always looking for volunteers to help feed, clothe, and encourage those in need. Check within your community to see how you can serve.
- Donate.** Have clothes that you no longer use? Or baby stuff that has taken up storage far too long? Be a blessing and donate. Whether you choose to bless someone within your own family or give to the Salvation Army, your kindness will go a long way.



JimDre WESTBROOK, “THE 31-YEAR OLD VIRGIN”

By Loureva Slade

He’s 31. He’s educated. He’s an entrepreneur. He’s nice looking. He’s a man of God. And...

He’s a virgin.

In a society where men are given props for their many sexual conquests, it isn’t often we hear about a young man making a conscious decision to save himself for his future wife. But JimDre Westbrook is an anomaly; he has done just that. His desire to honor God is his top priority and means more to him than temporary pleasure or fitting in.

Originally from Saginaw, Michigan, JimDre was raised in a traditional Baptist household. Although his parents weren’t “super religious,” they made sure JimDre had a strong understanding of who God is and emphasized the importance of having a personal relationship with Him. JimDre made the mature decision to accept Jesus as his Lord and Savior and was baptized in the second grade. He took this decision seriously and committed to live a life that is pleasing to God.

JimDre had “the talk” with his mother and made the choice to abstain from sex until marriage when he was just 14 years old. He knew it would be difficult, but he believed he could do it. According to JimDre, he thought it would be the coolest thing to give his wife something special that no one else had had. (Hebrews 13:4a: “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled.”) But more important than that, He wanted to honor God and see first-hand just how God would bless him for his decision. (Deuteronomy 11:27: “The blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God.”)

JimDre knew he would have to face many temptations—especially during his college years at the University of Michigan—but He believed that with God’s help, he could overcome them. I asked him what young people can do to successfully prevail over sexual temptation and he narrowed it down to four things.

First, **know yourself**. 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4 says, “For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor.” During the college years many people are trying to discover who they are. But if you know you want to abstain from sex, in particular, you have to be firm. “If you play with fire, you will get burned. Temptation knows your weakness, so hold your ground and know who you are.”

Second, **stay active**. Make sure your mind isn’t on sexual things. Philippians 4:8 says, “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” If you’re in school, keep your head in a book. Get involved in sports or other extracurricular activities. Don’t let the enemy catch you idle. (“An idle mind is the devil’s playground.”) “Make sure you’re active so temptation doesn’t catch you slipping.”

Third, **stay focused** on the things that are in front of you. There isn’t a single thing God commands us to stay away from because He wants us to be unhappy. His commands are there for our own protection. If we are sidetracked by sexual sin and all that comes along with it (i.e. diseases, unplanned pregnancies, soul ties, and inability to make clear-minded decisions), it takes our focus and attention away from kingdom business.

Finally, **stay faithful**. Stay prayed up and keep your eyes on God. He will help you. 1 Corinthians 10:13 says: “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”

When JimDre turned 30-years old, he went public with his decision to remain celibate until marriage. He posted about it on social media and was overwhelmed by the support he received. He became known as the “30-Year Old Virgin,” at the time, and started a website, worththewaitguy.com, to inspire/encourage others like him. JimDre initially thought he was the only male his age holding on to his virginity, but after coming out with his website, discovered there are many other men (and women) who have also chosen to wait.

With his announcement also came a great deal more temptation from ladies who wanted to “test him.” He let them know that he is serious about his decision to stand firm in the Lord. He’s so serious that even if he meets a woman he knows is “the one,” he will not have sex with her until they are husband and wife. In his words, “I’m 31. I’ve been waiting for a long time. If I can wait, the reward I will get from God will be worth it. If I can present my body as ‘a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God,’ nothing will beat that.”

JimDre Westbrook is the founder of worththewaitguy.com. He is also co-owner of Live at Your Own Pace (LAYOP), a lifestyle brand that provides quality clothing for men, women, and children. If you would like to connect with JimDre, feel free to follow him on social media (@JimDre Westbrook). He also invites you to reach out to him for prayer and encouragement through his website (worththewaitguy.com). He is never too busy to help out and promises that he personally answers all his emails.



BEING A GOOD STEWARD OF YOUR FINANCES

By Vicki Childress

“Lord help me be a better steward of my money!” is what I prayed daily after constantly looking at my bank account only to find overdraft fees and not enough money to cover my upcoming expenses. Somewhere along the way I had allowed my “blind spending” habits to control the course my finances took. Going from a dual-income to a one-income household didn’t seem to grab my financial attention. The hubby and I were still living as if we were earning two incomes. We had exhausted our savings accounts and 401K’s. In addition, we had one credit card left that was pretty much to its limits. Our outgoing expenses were more than our incoming money, and something needed to change. We surrendered our financial dilemma to the Lord, and searched His word for answers.

This has been a very humbling and challenging season for my family and me. However, God has been faithful and has proven that HE will provide! Even as the holiday season approaches, we are determined to exercise the lessons we’ve learned in managing what we have.

Below are a few tips that will help you stay financially wise!

Step #1 – Understand the difference between NEEDS and WANTS.

Philippians 4:19 says... “And my God will supply every NEED of yours according to His riches in Christ Jesus.” Remember that a need is something that’s necessary for your survival. Differentiating our needs from the things we really want (desires) is key. When shopping always ask yourself: “Do I need this right now? Can I honestly afford this?” If the answers are no, walk away...keep it pushing.

Step #2 – Work with what you have!

Luke 16:10-12 reads, “One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much.” God clearly wants us to be realistic with our current financial situations. If you are like me who was once spending like crazy and later shuffling around bill payments, then something has to change. We have to take a real look at what our financial obligations are and commit to taking care of them FIRST before spending on desires. God can’t bless us or even trust us with more if we can’t even manage the little we have. Be wise and pay attention to your reality.

Step #3 – Step back and adjust.

Proverbs 19:14 reads, “House and wealth are inherited from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the Lord.” As the person who looks over the finances in our home, I had to become prudent if I was going to help get us to a place of freedom. Plus I had more of the “blind spending” habits than my husband. This meant I had to be practical about the needs of our family and adjust to ensure that we would have enough to cover them. God was and still is teaching us. I’ve had to make multiple trips back to stores to return items that I desired rather than needed. We’ve had to cut out fast food completely because when I added up the amount of money spent on fast food, it always totaled the amount I needed to cover a bill – and I wouldn’t have had to borrow it. Remember **convenience does not justify wants over needs.**

Step #4 – Give what you have!

As I’ve been on this journey to financial freedom, I’ve realized that material things can never replace the gifts of love, affirmation, security, peace, trustworthiness, friendship, companionship, and support. Because I accept this truth, I’m no longer so quick to spend what I don’t have on things that have no lasting value. As the holiday season approaches, let’s not get distracted by all that is in the world – the desires of the flesh and eyes, and the pride of life – for all these things will pass away. Instead give the gift of the gospel. Show love to others. Share the story of our Savior. Invest spiritually in the lives around you. This will keep you both financially and spiritually free!





VIRTUE WITHOUT VIRGINITY By Christina X-Limit, Guest Contributor

Growing up I remember hearing a whole lot about the value in my virginity. It inspired me!

I wanted to be the girl who waited until I was married to have sex. I understood that my virginity was a gift I could never get back and I wanted to give it away one time to the one person I'd spend the rest of my life with.

Then it happened; I met a guy. A guy who fed into my already present insecurities and the ever-burning desire of my heart to have a man that loved me without fail. Something I felt I lacked from my own father and that I didn't recognize in God yet. It didn't take long for us to take steps I'd never taken before that made it easier to go down a path I'd never intended to go down so soon.

By 15 years old I was sexually active. By 16 I'd had my first two abortions. And by 17 years old I had a restraining order against my stalking rapist, my third abortion, and a jaded sense of what sex actually was.

In my first two years of sexually activity I suffered many traumas that both numbed and severely depressed me. But I continued to share my body with partners I hoped would be more than they ever turned out to be.

First, this was indicative of the fact that I had no business having sex. My emotional maturity and understanding were not where they needed to be in order to engage in safe sex. Because having sex safely has just as much to do with protecting our hearts, minds, and spirits as it does with protecting our bodies.

But no one told me that.

And no one told me that just because I'd had sex once didn't mean I had to keep having it. No one told me that every sexual partner would leave a residual imprint that would contribute to how I understood sex. That EACH time I laid with a partner I gave a gift; it wasn't lost with my virginity. That virginity and virtue are not synonymous and they could exist outside of each other. That my body wasn't depreciated in value just because I was no longer a virgin and that it shouldn't be given away arbitrarily.

But now I know that.

I know that being chaste is an option even AFTER you've had sex for the first time. At any point, with any partner, you can choose to not engage in sexual activity. No partner is entitled to your body just because another has had it. Every partner teaches you a little something about what sex is, right or wrong, and you need to decide what you're willing to contend with the day you meet your God ordained mate.

Embracing your power as a woman or man of God means also embracing the power of your virtue. The power in the gift of your body. And reclaiming your Virtue even Without your Virginity.

-Christina Xlimit-



SOCIAL MEDIA DETOX

Is social media taking over your life? Has it become your idol? How many minutes, hours or days do you dedicate to scrolling through Facebook posts and sharing your thoughts, pictures or inspirational quotes? How long does it take you to get the flawless Instagram picture set in perfect lighting? Are you literally Snapchatting your life away? Watching hours of YouTube videos eagerly anticipating your favorite person's next upload? Step back and take a look at all these social media sites then ask yourself; what am I hoping to gain from this activity? Are you looking for likes, approval, attention or value? What could you accomplish in the time you spend online? You could write that song that has always been in your heart. You could study for and ace that upcoming exam. You could spend quality time with God, family and friends. These things will add to the quality of your life and in turn you'll feel more fulfilled and not have to turn to the internet. Social Media can be fun and informative; however less is more when it comes to spending time on these sites.

How do I detox from social media?

Go cold turkey: No social media for one week.

Give yourself a cutoff: Perhaps 6 pm (dinner time)

Limit your time: go on social media in increments of 20 minutes at a time or 30 minutes daily.

Have a beneficial activity that replaces this: reading, cleaning, working out, cooking, etc.

C.A.L.I.

APPROVED



Deitrick Haddon's newest album *Masterpiece* will be sure to bless you. From songs like "Be Like Jesus" and "Masterpiece" you will be encouraged and excited about walking with God, knowing that we are One.

Travis Greene is adamant about his faith in God! His music reiterates the truths conveyed in God's word and reminds you to sit back and relax, because God's got this!



Maranda Willis's single, "Nobody Like You Lord" is nothing but pure worship. After listening just once, you will hum this tune throughout your day and remind yourself that no one can compare to our God!



By Eboni Mamolejos

WHAT'S TRENDING NOW



At any given time you can hop online to see what billions of people deem important by looking at trending topics on social media. I'll be the first to admit that sometimes those tweets & posts can be downright entertaining. However, everything that glitters ain't gold and everything with a hashtag isn't important. Now, there is nothing wrong with a little entertainment or even an informative post here and there. The problem occurs when we are placing a higher priority on trending topics instead of the Word of God. While the popular topics on social media are often elusive and always changing, God's Word never changes. Today's important topics in the bible are tomorrow's important topics and unlike the popular makeup tutorials that I can never seem to get right, the Instruction given in the Bible is totally attainable and ten times more rewarding than the perfect eyebrow or smoky eye.

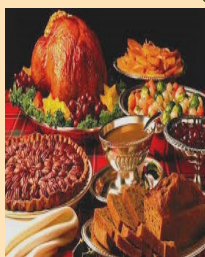
God wants us to place our lives before Him. Romans 12:1-2 says that we should take our everyday life and place it before God as an offering. What does that look like in real life? It's simple...ask God what He wants from your life. What He wants and what you want may differ. Jesus probably didn't feel like dying on a cross but He gave up His will for the will of His Father. (See Luke 22:42) I'm thinking that God isn't going to ask you to hang on a cross anywhere. So any sacrifice short of that should be easier...right? Hebrews 12:2 says, for the joy set before Him, He endured the cross. Keep in mind that I didn't say it would be comfortable to give up some of your time on Snapchat or Instagram but I can promise you it will be worth it when you see positive changes happen in your life. Jeremiah 29:11 says that God's plan is the best plan for us. So fix your attention on God throughout your day by talking to Him about what He wants you to do with your time. Getting caught up in online trends can be fun but it can waste a lot of your time and easily distract you from fulfilling the purpose for which you were created. Let the hashtags of your life reflect God's will. If your life had a hashtag, what would it be?

What's cooking at your house?

Share your favorite holiday dishes with our CALI readers using the hashtag

#CaliNewsletterHolidayEats.

Don't forget to include pics!



CALL FOR SALVATION

Knowing the truth about God and understanding why He came to earth is a critical aspect of becoming a believer in Christ Jesus. John 3:16 tells us that God so loved the world that He gave His one and only son (Jesus) and whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. God loves you so much and desires a relationship with you. He wants you to know the truth about who He is and His will for your life. Confess your sins, accept His grace and mercy, and get into a good bible-based church. This will help you

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