

“Save the Kiss” Challenge

By Marianne Dyogi

<http://AsHeLoves.org/chastity/save-the-kiss-challenge/>

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, given by God? You belong no longer to yourselves. Remember at what price you have been bought and make your body serve the glory of God.” (1Cor 6:19-20)

After reading *I Kissed Dating Goodbye* by Joshua Harris, I made a promise to myself during the summer of 2004 that I would save my next kiss for my husband. I wish it would’ve been my very first kiss, but unfortunately I’d already given that away to a boyfriend in high school who didn’t know how to take care of my heart. Hurt too many times by too many people, I realized that the gift of a kiss should be elevated to a blessed privilege given to one who has proven his love to me in a way that no one else has before. So then and there, as I closed the book, I made my rule and vowed to keep it from that day forward.

It wasn’t difficult at the time because, of course, I wasn’t dating anyone. When Gary walked into my life and we were just friends, I thought I’d share it with him to see how he as a guy felt about such a radical standard. We were talking on the phone one day about relationships, and I said, “You know what? I know this might sound weird, but I decided that if a guy wanted to marry me someday our first kiss would be at the altar on our wedding day.”

I could almost see him smiling on the other end. “That’s not weird,” he replied.

“Really? You don’t think so?”

“Not at all. That’s actually pretty cool.”

Then, ironically, I thought he was weird. I didn’t expect him to get it. But Gary wasn’t my boyfriend so the rule didn’t apply to him. At least it wouldn’t for the next couple of months...

If you read to the end of our story, you found that it was the beginning of a whole new phase of our lives – the start of a courtship that we were both trying to figure out as we went along. He obviously knew about my “Save the Kiss” Challenge and agreed to follow the rule. Kisses on the cheek and the forehead – okay. Lips were off-limits.

Why would I do such a thing? People – especially other guys in my life – told me that I was crazy. They wondered why I would deprive my boyfriend of something they believed he deserved. My girlfriends loved it. They told me that they didn’t think they could ever keep to the same rule, but they sure admired us for trying.

I had to do it. I had to know that this guy wanted me for me...that he would respect my dignity and protect my purity. I wanted to do everything I could to guard his heart, too, and to lead him closer to God. We would build upon the friendship we already had, and carefully discern every step forward we took in the relationship. It was too easy for me to get emotionally attached, and I knew that if I let him kiss me, it would be too hard for me to keep a clear head during the courtship. There was no guarantee that he would be my husband, and if he was meant to marry someone else, at least I would have helped keep him pure for his future wife.

It is true that there are couples out there who have a good handle on self-control. They are able to keep their kisses simple without going any further than just a peck on the lips. I’m not saying that every couple who shares a kiss always goes further than just the kiss. I’m just saying that I knew myself too well. I made up the rule for myself as much as I did for him. WE needed it.

Gary was a very affectionate person. He liked holding my hand, giving me hugs, and showering me with a lot of sweet kisses – on the cheek. There would be days when he would be holding me in his arms and I'd look into his smiling face, kicking myself for making up my “no kissing rule.”

But come July 8, 2006 I was so glad that I did because on that day at the altar – in front of God and our family and friends – we kissed for the FIRST time.

It was the most beautiful kiss I'd ever had in my entire life.

Not everyone at our wedding was aware of our rule. But the few who were knew that it was an incredibly special moment. I'll never forget hearing Alex (Gary's best man who had watched our entire friendship/relationship unfold) tell us how his jaw dropped...how he wanted to turn around and ask the whole church, “Do you see this?! Does everybody see this?”

Mind you, it was not easy. I wish I could tell you that we didn't struggle. I would've loved to share how good we were about keeping our thoughts and intentions chaste 100% of the time.

But I will tell you that it was worth the wait. Meeting the challenge of saving our first kiss together helped us to communicate better, love each other more deeply, and allow God to prepare our hearts for the sacrament of marriage.

We will share this with our children someday. Through our witness to God's grace, we will tell them it can be done. For nothing is impossible with God.



DISCLAIMER TO THE READER: *Saving your kiss for the altar is only one of the means for preserving one's purity for marriage. Just as a seed planted does not flower into full bloom overnight, we must move forward in our relationships with prudence and patience, allowing a solid friendship to develop before entering into a lifelong covenant and also practicing emotional chastity so as to guard each other's hearts from premature intimacy. To learn more about the marriage preparation process recommended to Gary and me by our parish, please visit: <http://asheloves.org/preparing-for-marriage/engagement/>*