

20.13

## 1 Thessalonians 4:3–5—Self-Control

The True Love Waits campaign is a movement among evangelical Christian groups that focuses on encouraging teenagers to abstain from premarital sex. The campaign has been associated with ceremonies according to which teenagers make “virginity pledges” and then wear “chastity rings” as symbols of their commitment to preserve their virginity until marriage.

The campaign apparently derived its name from misheard lyrics of a popular Buddy Holly song. The 1960 song “True Love Ways” (according to some reports, the most-played song at weddings in the United States) features a chorus affirming that two lovers “know true love ways.” These words were frequently misunderstood, however, with the result that many people thought the chorus proclaimed, “No true love waits.” Evangelical Christians responded to the misheard lyric by insisting that, in fact, true love does wait.

In any case, the True Love Waits campaign has typically featured 1 Thessalonians 4:3–5 as its theme verse: “For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication; that each one of you know how to control your own body in holiness and honor, not with lustful passion.”

The True Love Waits campaign would eventually garner some unexpected publicity (support?) from a song associated with the

alternative British rock group Radiohead. Beginning in the mid-1990s, that group would often perform a song called “True Love Waits” in concerts. The song, written in 1995 by Thom Yorke, could have been inspired by misheard Buddy Holly lyrics, but probably was an intentional nod to the virginity/chastity movement, of which York had become cognizant. If so, the name of the movement is employed somewhat metaphorically: the image that the song summons is not specifically “waiting to have sex” but rather yearning to find a reliable, trustworthy relationship. A studio version of “True Love Waits” would eventually be included on Radiohead’s 2016 album, *A Moon Shaped Pool*.