



*“First seek the counsel of the LORD.”*  
(1 Kings 22:5 NIV)

# Pregnancy . . . Unplanned

## I’m Pregnant?

by June Hunt

The story has been repeated a hundred different times in a hundred different ways: ***an unwed teenager learns she is pregnant***. But, on this occasion, the stigma of being *unmarried and with child* looms especially heavy. The fact that she is engaged hardly deflects the eyes of accusation glaring at her . . . for her fiancé knows that he is not the father.

Rather than eagerly anticipating his wedding day, his heart is heavy—his dreams are dashed. Thoughts whirl through his mind as he tries to consider his options: *What is he to do with the one who was once the “love of his life”? And what will happen to the child she is carrying?*

Neither parent could have fathomed God’s plan regarding this pregnancy. Never could they have known the path their lives would take, nor the supernatural work God would accomplish through the child of His making. This baby would be named Jesus . . . Jesus the Christ, the Savior of the world!

*“She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,  
because he will save his people from their sins.”*  
(Matthew 1:21)

## I. DEFINITIONS

An unplanned or unwanted pregnancy is a crisis for some and a “mere inconvenience” for others. But regardless of the circumstance, the joy of pregnancy and the pride of parenthood are painfully missing. Feelings of guilt . . . hurt . . . anger . . . fear . . . all bond together like a ton of bricks and press down heavily on the heart. Like Mary and Joseph (Jesus’ parents), you may not understand all that God has planned for you or your baby, but you can know that it is God who formed your baby in the womb, and He did so with a good purpose.

*“As you do not know the path of the wind, or how the body is formed in a mother’s womb,  
so you cannot understand the work of God, the Maker of all things.”*  
(Ecclesiastes 11:5)

## A. What Is an Unplanned, Unwanted Pregnancy?

An unwanted pregnancy is the predicament of an expectant mother who, due to the circumstances of her life or the health of the baby, does not want to have her child.

- The predicament and pressure of an unwanted pregnancy can extend to the father of the child as well. Sometimes the mother wants the baby, but the father does not. And sometimes the father wants the child, but the mother does not.
- An unplanned, unwanted pregnancy could be the turning point in your life, God's invitation for you to walk a higher road . . . to rise above the wrong ways of this world and to walk in God's way so that you can be in His perfect will.

*“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”  
(Romans 12:2)*

## TWO CATEGORIES OF UNPLANNED, UNWANTED PREGNANCIES

- A **Crisis Pregnancy** is the conception of a child that causes severe anxiety within the expectant mother because of various factors such as . . .
  - the conception of a child before marriage (premarital pregnancy)
  - the conception of a child outside of marriage (extramarital pregnancy)
  - the extremely young age of the mother
  - the questionable health of the mother and/or the child
  - the lack of emotional support from the baby's father or from her own parents
  - the trauma of rape or incest
- An **Inconvenient Pregnancy** is the conception of a child that is untimely and/or bothersome because of various factors such as . . .
  - the failure of contraceptives to work
  - the interruption of school, career, or future plans
  - the real or perceived lack of finances
  - the pregnancy late in life
  - the separation of the couple due to military, prison, marital problems, or divorce
  - the desire to have no additional children or no children at all

## Q “Shouldn't every child be a wanted child?”

**A** Although an unborn baby may not be wanted by the mother or the father, no baby is unwanted by God. The Bible says that God knows every child and has plans for every child—even before conception. He says,

*“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart.”  
(Jeremiah 1:5)*

## B. What Is the Expectant Mother's Dilemma?

### Story of a True Crisis Pregnancy

"Maria" returned home in the middle of her freshman year at college. She needed to divulge something to her parents that just couldn't be discussed by phone. But watching her mother's face would be one of the most difficult experiences she would ever endure. As Maria tried to share her secret, shame and anguish blocked her words. . . . She couldn't get them out of her mouth. Then her mother guessed. . . . Maria was pregnant!

Maria made this statement, "I was a mess. I was living life for me, not worried about the consequences of my actions. Close friends were telling me I was getting wild—walking right into trouble—but I wouldn't listen. I was all wrapped up in doing my own thing! I thought the boy I was seeing at the time was wonderful. We were having so much fun. I didn't want anything else except to be with him." Maria had reasoned, *If it feels good, do it*. But the problem with this reasoning is found in this proverb . . .

*"All a man's ways seem right to him,  
but the LORD weighs the heart."  
(Proverbs 21:2)*

**Q** "What does God think of me for being sexually active and not married? How can He forgive me for becoming pregnant and bringing so much hurt and embarrassment to my family?"

**A** Your pregnancy has not taken God by surprise. Although He knew this situation would occur in your life, He never has wavered, nor will He ever waver in His love for you. His feelings for you are those of compassion, not condemnation. And if you allow Him, He will restore your life and give you new meaning and purpose.

*"[God] redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion."  
(Psalm 103:4)*

### Story of a True Inconvenient Pregnancy

"Congratulations," the doctor said, "You're pregnant." Natalie and her husband, Brad, were both thirty-five-years-old with three children at home. This was not good news! The announcement of another pregnancy ignited an explosion. Brad believed that their resources were already strained and the reality of another baby would create a negative impact on the family. This was too much for Brad.

The only alternative Brad could conceive was for Natalie to have an abortion. He told her that aborting the child was the only solution for their dilemma. Natalie was hurt . . . wounded . . . dismayed. She couldn't believe her husband would make such a request. Her conscience told her, *Just because abortion is legal, that doesn't make it right*.

**Q “I feel horrible because my husband wants me to have an abortion. How can I go against my husband when the Bible tells me I must be a submissive wife to him?”**

**A** The Bible says both husbands and wives are to have a submissive spirit toward one another. *“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ”* (Ephesians 5:21). If you feel horrible at the thought of abortion, then you should not submit to an act that violates your conscience. Ultimately, your *highest submission* must be to obey God alone.

*“We must obey God rather than men!”* (Acts 5:29)

## **C. What Are the Developmental Stages of Your Unborn Baby?**

Life doesn’t begin at the point of delivery when the baby takes a first breath. Even though you may not feel pregnant or look different, within three weeks of conception, that little life within you has developed a brain, a beating heart, and tiny limbs that begin to “sprout” and move about. During this time, your unborn will grow from a *zygote* to *embryo* to *fetus* . . . just as a newborn grows from child to adolescent to adult.

*“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”*  
(Psalm 139:14)

### **FROM ZYGOTE TO EMBRYO TO FETUS<sup>1</sup>**

- **Stage One—from conception to 10 to 14 Days**

The word *zygote* refers to the unborn baby during the first stage of prenatal development. During this time, the zygote travels down the fallopian tube and attaches to the uterine wall. The fertilized egg or ovum contains the entire genetic code of a unique human being.

- **Stage Two—from 3 to 8 Weeks**

The term *embryo* refers to the unborn baby during the second stage of prenatal development. At this stage, the fertilized egg develops the main parts of the body and the structure and organs take shape.

- **Stage Three—from 8 to 40 Weeks**

The term *fetus* applies to the unborn baby during the final stage of prenatal development, from the time the features are distinct until actual birth.

Although conception and development of the unborn baby are hidden from our view, God sees and oversees all. In the Psalms we can see God’s direct involvement in our lives through David’s words to God . . . .

*“My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body.”*  
(Psalm 139:15-16)

## D. What Are the Three Trimesters?

The full nine months of your pregnancy are divided into three even segments called trimesters. Each trimester lasts three months.

### CHRONOLOGY OF A NEW HUMAN LIFE<sup>2</sup>

#### First Trimester

- **First Month**

- Immediately upon fertilization, cellular development begins. Before implantation, the sex of the new life can be determined.
- At implantation, the new life is composed of hundreds of cells and has developed a protective hormone to prevent the mother's body from rejecting the unborn as foreign tissue.
- At 17 days, the new life has developed blood cells. The placenta is a part of the new life and not a part of the mother.
- At 18 days, occasional pulsations of a muscle occur—this muscle is the heart.
- At 19 days, eyes begin to develop.
- At 20 days, the foundation of the brain, spinal cord, and entire nervous system has been laid.
- At 21 days, the heart begins beating.
- At 28 days, the backbone and 40 pairs of muscles have developed along the trunk of the new life. Arms and legs are forming.

- **Second Month**

- At 30 days, regular blood flow is evident within the vascular system; the ears and nasal development have begun.
- At 40 days, the baby's heart is beating faster than the mother's heart and produces almost 20 percent of the energy of an adult heart.

- **Week 6**—The baby is one-half inch long.

- At 42 days, the skeleton is complete and reflexes are present.
- At 43 days, electrical brain wave patterns can be recorded. This is usually ample evidence that “thinking” is taking place in the brain. The new life may be thought of as a thinking person.

- **Week 7**—the baby is three-fourths of an inch long.

- At 49 days, the fetus has the appearance of a miniature doll, complete with fully-developed fingers, toes, and ears.

- **Week 8**

- At 56 days, all organs are functioning—including stomach, liver, kidneys, brain—all systems are intact. The new life has all its physical parts and now needs only nourishment. All future development is simply that of refinement and increase in size until maturity at approximately age twenty-three.

This stage is approximately two months before “quickening,” or the mother's feeling movement. The mother will usually not feel the baby's movements until four months after conception.

- **Third Month**

- At 9 weeks, the baby is two inches long. Fingerprints appear.
- At 9 and 10 weeks, the new life squints, swallows, and retracts the tongue. The contour of the face and body look more like a baby's, and the physical characteristics are obvious.
- At 11 and 12 weeks, arms and legs move, while fingernails and toenails appear. The new life inhales and exhales amniotic fluid.

## **Second Trimester**

- **Fourth Month**

- At 13 weeks, hair appears on the baby's head.
- At 14 weeks, the baby can bring both hands together and suck on the thumb.
- At 16 weeks, genital organs are clearly differentiated. Hands are able to grasp. (See Hosea 12:3.) The new life swims, kicks, and turns somersaults, although movement is often still not felt by the mother.

- **Fifth Month**

- At 18 weeks, the baby is 12 inches long, and the mother can definitely feel her baby move. Vocal cords are working. . . . The new life has the ability to cry.

- **Sixth Month**

- At 26 weeks, the sensory organs are all working—the baby is able to hear, see, taste, and touch.

## **Third Trimester**

- **Seventh Month**

- At 28 weeks, the baby weighs about two and one-half pounds. Now the baby will begin to gain weight more rapidly.

- **Eight Month**

- At 31 weeks, the baby weighs about three pounds and is about 16 inches long. The baby's eyes are open during awake times.

- **Ninth Month**

- At 37 weeks, the baby's immune system develops in preparation for life outside the womb. Delivery will come very soon!

Although no one fully understands all the ways and works of God, He will do what is right on behalf of both you and your child. Each precious *life* in a mother's womb is being formed by God, the Maker of all things.

*"This is what the LORD says—your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the LORD, who has made all things."  
(Isaiah 44:24)*

**Q “If I decide to keep my baby, will I know how to be a good parent?”**

**A** Someone once said, “Single parenting is the hardest job in the universe”; however, God promises to give you His supernatural strength if you live dependently on Him. If you allow *His inner presence* to be in control of your life, then you can be His instrument to provide *security* for your child. A wise parent knows that a child’s need for emotional security is far greater than the need for material things or social advantage. Be assured; the Lord will give you the strength to do whatever He calls you to do.

*“He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.” (Isaiah 40:29)*

**E. What Is God’s Heart for Your Unborn Child?**

Even if you made a mistake, *your child is not a mistake!* God is not surprised by the creation of this new life—He is the Creator. And those whom He creates, He loves. Therefore, nothing will ever separate you or your baby from the love of God.

*“Neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”  
(Romans 8:39)*

- God is the author of life.

*“I bring to life.” (Deuteronomy 32:39)*

- God opens and closes the womb.

*“The LORD . . . opened her womb.” (Genesis 29:31)*

*“The LORD . . . closed her womb.” (1 Samuel 1:5)*

- God ordains all pregnancies—regardless of the circumstances.

*“This is what the LORD says—your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the LORD, who has made all things.” (Isaiah 44:24)*

- God creates every life.

*“Is he not your Father, your Creator, who made you and formed you?” (Deuteronomy 32:6)*

- God never forms a life without having plans for that life.

*“‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’” (Jeremiah 29:11)*

From God’s perspective, all pregnancies are of Him and therefore are wanted by Him.

**Q “If God is the creator of the baby inside my body, why do I feel like this premarital pregnancy is His punishment for my sin?”**

**A** Your pregnancy is not God’s *condemnation* for sin, but rather a *consequence* of sin. Although you made a mistake, your child is not a mistake. Look to God for His wisdom and His insight. He plans to use this perplexing circumstance of your life to draw you into a deeper relationship and dependency on Him. The Bible says,

*“It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees.” (Psalm 119:71)*



## II. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BEWILDERED MOTHER-TO-BE

In Mary and Joseph's world, pregnancy outside of marriage was viewed with such reproach, that according to the laws of the times, Mary could have been stoned to death. Even if she attempted to hide her pregnancy, Mary knew that keeping it a secret would be impossible. The natural changes in her body would result in heartrending accusations as more and more people discovered her secret. She also knew that neighbors and close friends would struggle just to speak to her. Before she began to show the signs of "*being with child*," she left town for three months to stay in the home of distant relatives.

You, too, may be struggling with an unplanned pregnancy. For many expectant mothers, pregnancy can feel like an overwhelming burden . . . a painful trial you wish to avoid. But remember, all trials come with God's grace for endurance.

*"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."  
(2 Corinthians 12:9)*

### A. Could You Be Pregnant . . . and Not Know It?

Considering the power of denial or the possibility of naiveté, it could take months before a younger or older female becomes aware that she is pregnant. Just one sexual encounter opens the possibility of pregnancy. That is why every female needs to be alert to signs and symptoms that seem unusual. When pregnancy is a reality, many physical changes take place that indicate the beginning of a tiny life being formed . . . directly under your heart.

*"The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge; the ears of the wise seek it out."  
(Proverbs 18:15)*

- Do you have persistent nausea in the morning or during the day?<sup>3</sup>
- Do you experience frequent mood changes?
- Did you miss your monthly cycle?
- Do you have tender or enlarged breasts?
- Do you urinate frequently?
- Do you feel excessively tired?
- Does intuition cause you to suspect that you are pregnant?

A missed menstrual period is the most likely sign of a pregnancy, but if you experience any of these symptoms, find out for sure. Don't wait, hoping the symptoms will go away. Seek a pregnancy test as soon as possible.

*"The wise heart will know the proper time and procedure."  
(Ecclesiastes 8:5)*

**Q “I’m pregnant and not married. How can I face the shame of telling my parents?”**

**A** Because you chose to have sexual activity designed for married adults, you will now be facing choices that will require adult decisions. One of your first decisions must be to tell your parents—they deserve to know the truth. The majority of parents will be supportive after dealing with their own mixed feelings. Be honest and be adult in your decision making.

*“When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became [an adult], I put childish ways behind me.” (1 Corinthians 13:11)*

**B. What Are the Predictable Reactions to a Problem Pregnancy?<sup>4</sup>**

We all face unplanned trials in life, but we can choose to see these trials as opportunities to gain insights about the hidden gifts from God . . . even those that come in unwanted packages. When your faith clings to the certainty that eventually peace and contentment are possible, no matter your circumstances, healing and personal growth will take place. Although you will experience the *normal reactions* to an unplanned, unwanted pregnancy, cling to the truth that God, in His mercy, will bring good out of your situation.

*“In all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”  
(Romans 8:28)*

## **DENIAL**

- “This isn’t true. . . . It’s a mistake.”
- “This couldn’t happen to me.”
- “This is not my fault.”
- “There are many reasons for missing a period.”

**When it’s difficult to face the truth, acknowledge the truth of God. . . .**

*“You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”  
(John 8:32)*

## **DISTRESS**

- “Who should I tell about this?”
- “What will people think of me?”
- “My life is ruined.”
- “How could I have been so stupid?”

**When drowning in the sea of distress, cry out to God. . . .**

*“Do not hide your face from me when I am in distress.  
Turn your ear to me; when I call, answer me quickly.”  
(Psalm 102:2)*

## DEPRESSION

- “I feel so alone and helpless.”
- “I hate myself.”
- “I can’t face the shame.”
- “I would rather die than face the future.”

**When all hope seems gone, place your hope in God. . . .**

*“No one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame, but they will be put to shame who are treacherous without excuse.”  
(Psalm 25:3)*

## DREAD

- “I can’t bear to tell my parents.”
- “Will my boyfriend leave me?”
- “What will I do about school or a job?”
- “No one will ever want to marry me.”

**When overcome with fear of the future, ask of God . . .**

*“Take away the disgrace I dread, for your laws are good.”  
(Psalm 119:39)*

## DILEMMA

- “I can’t keep this baby—but I can’t let my baby go.”
- “Should I marry the baby’s father—even if I don’t love him?”
- “Should I consider abortion—even if I know it’s wrong?”
- “Should I raise my baby or consider adoption?”

**When dealing with a difficult dilemma, seek godly wisdom. . . .**

*“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.”  
(James 1:5)*

**Q “I feel scared! What will people say—my boyfriend, my family, my friends? What will happen to my future? How do I handle my fear?”**

**A** Being scared is understandable. You are challenged with major changes that are physical and emotional—even social. When you are afraid, focus on the compassion of Christ. In John chapter 8, the judgmental leaders of Israel asked Jesus if, according to the law, they should stone a woman who had been caught in adultery. Jesus did not condemn her—but, at the same time, He told her to leave her life of sin. His primary concern was actually not her sin, but her soul—she needed a changed life, and she got it! Christ is handing you this same cup of compassion. You can be at peace by giving Him your life. He will give you a new life that has enough love for two.

*“Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” (Isaiah 41:10)*

## **C. What Are Common Characteristics in Premarital Pregnancies?**

Most young girls dream of the day of their wedding . . . a handsome groom, a captivating dress, abundant flowers, beautiful bridesmaids, family and friends . . . and of course, a four-tiered cake at a large reception. No young woman sees herself walking into an adoption agency alone . . . or clutching the release papers signed by her ex-boyfriend . . . or praying for a good home for her unborn baby. How did her dreams become such a dilemma? What characteristics are common in premarital sexual activity?

- Curiosity about sex
- Desire for popularity
- Desire to escape family conflicts
- Emotional immaturity
- Fear of losing a boyfriend
- Fear of missing out on life
- Fear of never getting married
- Inability to make decisions
- Inability to set boundaries
- Insecurity
- Involvement in satanic practices
- Lack of affectionate parents (especially fathers)
- Lack of goals for the future
- Lack of parental guidance
- Loneliness
- Low self-esteem
- Need for intimacy
- Need to feel loved
- Poor communication skills
- Pressure from peers

God gives us guidance so that we will go in the right direction and not end up in the wrong place at the wrong time doing the wrong thing. He doesn't say to walk away from sexual temptation, God says, *“RUN AWAY . . . for your own good!”*

*“Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.”*  
(1 Corinthians 6:18)

**Q “Will my baby always be an illegitimate child?”**

**A** Not at all! Your baby is in no way illegitimate. In reality, there are no illegitimate children, only illegitimate parents. Your baby is innocent of any wrongdoing.

*“Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent—the LORD detests them both.”  
(Proverbs 17:15)*

**D. What Has Happened to Family Values?**

Too many parents are abdicating their responsibility to train their children with moral values. Too many leaders have adopted the immoral values of an unprincipled culture. The sexual relationship was created by God for procreation and for pleasure, but only within the protective confines of marriage. Sex apart from marriage demonstrates a lack of respect for the heart of God regarding immoral sexual behavior and will always result in consequences.

*“This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Since you have forgotten me and thrust me behind your back, you must bear the consequences of your lewdness and prostitution.”  
(Ezekiel 23:35)*

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF POOR PARENTING**

- Mothers who fail to be positive role models for their daughters
- Mothers who provide birth control pills for their daughters
- Fathers who are not affectionate, leaving their daughters desperate for male affection
- Fathers who are absent from the home
- Parents who allow children to date when they are too young
- Parents who allow teenagers to be home alone over long periods of time without supervision
- Parents who fail to train their children to be responsible for their own lives
- Parents who allow their children to watch sexually oriented tv
- Parents who don't model love between each other
- Parents who fail to communicate love to their children
- Parents who fail to train their children to stand alone against peer pressure

A strong picture of parental involvement is found in one of the most important passages of the Old Testament.

*“Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”  
(Deuteronomy 6:5-9)*

**Q “Are the parents responsible when their teenager gets involved in premarital sex?”**

**A** No. Everyone has a God-given conscience that enables them to determine right from wrong. While many teens have been allowed to be self-indulgent instead of receiving training to be self-controlled, a teenager is still responsible for his or her own actions.

*“Each of us will give an account of himself to God.” (Romans 14:12)*



### III. CAUSES FOR FEARS REGARDING UNPLANNED PREGNANCIES

A close look at Mary's pregnancy reveals that her experience was far from easy . . . and the same was true for Joseph. Imagine the burden. Imagine the dismay he must have felt when he learned that his bride-to-be was expecting a child. Being a righteous man, Joseph knew that he wasn't the father, yet he sought to handle the situation in the kindest way possible. He would end their engagement discreetly, so as to spare her public disgrace. (See Matthew 1:19.)

But after an angel addressed his fears and revealed that Mary's child was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20), Joseph took her as his bride and helped her with the parenting of the child, Jesus. Looking back through the pages of history, Mary's pregnancy proved to be a blessing . . . not a burden. And just as Joseph and Mary yielded themselves and the pregnancy to God's plan, Jesus calls you to yield yourself and your pregnancy to Him.

*"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me."  
(John 14:1)*

#### A. Why Do Many Consider Children a Burden Rather Than a Blessing?

Having children has become undesirable to an increasing number of people. Over time, changes have occurred in the way children are valued. While the *value* of raising children has *decreased*, the *fear* of raising children has *increased*.

- **The value placed on raising children has decreased because . . .**
  - Some desire to have children only under "ideal" financial conditions.
  - Sometimes both parents desire to have a career.
  - Some desire to not contribute to overpopulation.
  - Some desire to live an unburdened lifestyle without children.
  - Some desire to raise no more children than they already possess.
  - Some desire to not have children beyond a certain age in life.

#### Q "What's wrong with having personal preferences when it comes to having and raising children?"

A Nothing is wrong with having and acting on your own desires regarding children . . . until it comes to making a decision once a pregnancy occurs. Jesus said,

*"Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me." (Luke 9:48)*

- **The fear of raising children has increased because . . .**
  - Those raised in dysfunctional families sometimes feel inadequate to raise emotionally healthy children.
  - The increase of sexual promiscuity or alcohol and drug use among youth can cause couples to be afraid to bring children into the world.
  - The disrespect and rebellion of youth have intimidated many potential parents.

**Q “Things seem to be getting worse with each generation. Why should I bring a child into such a troubled world?”**

**A** Even though you may not want to bring a child into a world that seems immoral and chaotic, God’s heart is clear about childbearing, regardless of the circumstances.

*“Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them.”*  
(Psalm 127:3-5)

## **B. Why Is Sex outside of Marriage Increasing?**

The pleasures of sex have always presented both a *temptation* to sin and a *test* to withstand temptation. Discipline and self-denial require a person to value *principle over pleasure*. Becoming a person of principle comes from conviction and a belief in moral absolutes. Many who are lured by the pleasures of illicit sexual activity never realize there is a deadly hook hidden within these pleasures. When we find ourselves enticed by sex, God says,

*“If sinners entice you, do not give in to them.”*  
(Proverbs 1:10)

- **What are the three major contributors that lure people into illicit sex?**

- Marketing of sex through the media (magazines, television, movies, Internet)
- Proliferation of pornography (erotic sex on the Internet, sex chat rooms, movies, videos, TV, print)
- Easy access to becoming involved in sexual activity (lack of sexual boundaries set by parents, promotion of “safe sex” with the use of condoms, increased acceptance of oral sex and other pre-intercourse activities)

*“My eyes are ever on the LORD, for only he will release my feet from the snare.”*  
(Psalm 25:15)

**Q “How can I have the courage to stand against the world and its acceptance of seemingly free sexual pleasure?”**

**A** It’s never too late to become sexually pure. Sexual purity involves controlling your eyes, which leads to controlling your body. God always honors the heart that truly seeks Him for strength to control the lure of illicit sexual desire.

*“Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong.”* (Exodus 23:2)

- Why have the three major consequences of illicit sex lessened?
  - Fear* of pregnancy has decreased because of birth control and legal abortion.
  - Fear* of sexually transmitted diseases has declined as the result of advances in medical science and the false message of “safe sex.”
  - Fear* of moral shame has diminished because of the media and cultural acceptance of premarital sex.

**Q “How could I have been so blind to the truth before I got pregnant?”**

**A** When we are tempted, we usually know what we should do, but often our hearts don’t want to live in the light of truth. Typically, we aren’t “blind to the truth”; we simply look away from the truth because it would convict us of our immoral behavior. We want to follow our feelings instead of fearing the consequences of our sin. This is why the Lord wants to shed light on our darkness. . . .

*“You are my lamp, O LORD; the LORD turns my darkness into light.” (2 Samuel 22:29)*

Regardless of how much the consequences of illicit sex have lessened, God says,

*“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. Put away perversity from your mouth . . . . Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you. Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.” (Proverbs 4:23-27)*

**C. How Does Ethics Determine Choices Regarding Unplanned Pregnancies?**

The definition of *ethics* is “a set of moral values or principles by which we make decisions involving our choices and conduct.” People make choices based on the system of ethics they decide to trust. Christians put their trust in Christ to enable them to live life according to God’s moral absolutes as revealed in His Word.

*“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.”  
(Psalm 119:105)*

• **Cultural Relativism says:**

“Nothing’s wrong with abortion. It’s certainly legal, and everyone is doing it.” Moral standards are based on the culture and one’s own conscience. There are no moral absolutes.

***Biblical Moral Absolutes:***

*“I have set before you life and death . . . . Choose life, so that you and your children may live.”  
(Deuteronomy 30:19-20)*

• **Behaviorism says:**

“Don’t rob yourself of natural desires.” We’re simply a product of our genes, and there’s no such thing as morality.

***Biblical Moral Absolutes:***

*“Say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and live self-controlled, upright and godly lives.”  
(Titus 2:12)*

• **Situation Ethics says:**

“You shouldn’t impose your values on others. Everyone’s situation is different.” Whatever is the most loving is the determining factor when choosing right from wrong.

***Biblical Moral Absolutes:***

*“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.” (2 Timothy 3:16)*

- **Emotive Ethics says:**

“If it feels right, do it.” Nothing is literally right or wrong; these words are only expressions of emotion.

***Biblical Moral Absolutes:***

*“There is a way that seems right . . . but in the end it leads to death.” (Proverbs 16:25)*

**Q “Can a Christian lapse into immorality and still receive God’s forgiveness?”**

**A** Yes. King David committed adultery with the wife of one of his soldiers, and he experienced the consequence of his sin. Yet, David later was referred to as “a man after God’s own heart,” and he said that through repentance and pain he became even closer to God. This was the prayer of David’s heart . . .

*“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” (Psalm 51:10)*

**D. What Is the Cause of Fears Surrounding Unwanted Pregnancies?**

Anyone who experiences an unwanted pregnancy faces many fears, especially, *What am I going to do now?* Our idealistic thinking causes us to believe, *This can’t be happening to me.* But how can we be so mired in disbelief? Many situations occur that we don’t plan. Because we often escape the consequences of our own negative behavior, we become lulled into believing *It won’t happen to me.* But repercussions do occur and, without strong support, fear and anxiety cause difficulty in deciding how to respond. You may feel that you are all alone, but you are not! The God who loves you is with you and can calm all your fears.

*“The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”  
(Deuteronomy 31:8)*

## **FACE YOUR PARALYZING FEARS**

**Freedom seems destroyed forever.**

But . . . *“If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed”* (John 8:36).

**Enjoyment of life, as it was, seems to be gone forever.**

But . . . *“The joy of the LORD is your strength”* (Nehemiah 8:10).

**Anger at God exists over your pregnancy.**

But . . . *“In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent”* (Psalm 4:4).

**Rejection by people is painful.**

But . . . *“Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me”* (Psalm 27:10).

**Security is threatened.**

But . . . *“You will be secure, because there is hope”* (Job 11:18).

**Q “In the midst of this fearful, unplanned pregnancy, will I ever have inner peace?”**

**A** With God, inner peace is possible, even in the midst of your problems and fears. Just remember, no problem is too big for God to solve! As the Prince of Peace, Jesus wants to *be peace* for you. Regardless of your fears and problems, you can have His *inner peace* when you have His *inner presence*. Jesus said,

*“In me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)*

## **E. Root Cause of Unplanned Pregnancies**

God created every person with three inner needs for love, for significance, and for security.<sup>5</sup> Our tendency is to seek to *meet these needs in our own way*, not realizing that God gives them to us for a purpose. He wants us to learn that He knows us intimately and that our deepest inner needs will only be completely met through Him. When our reasoning is incorrect, we will live by our own *wrong beliefs*. A wise person, however, knows that we accomplish nothing of lasting value apart from God’s plan. The Lord says,

*“I know the plans I have for you . . . plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”  
(Jeremiah 29:11)*

### **Wrong Belief:**

“I have the right to decide what to do with my own body. I’m afraid that having this baby will destroy my future happiness.”

- **Love:** “I only wanted to feel loved, but now I will be rejected and never have an opportunity to develop a loving marital relationship.” (crisis pregnancy)  
“It’s better not to bring an unwanted child into this world.” (inconvenient pregnancy)
- **Significance:** “My boyfriend has left me, and now he brags to his friends about his sexual conquests.” (crisis pregnancy)  
“I will have to give up my goals and plans.” (inconvenient pregnancy)
- **Security:** “I have absolutely no security now. I could lose my family and friends and even the father of my baby.” (crisis pregnancy)  
“This would throw our family into a crisis. A baby now would bring too much stress into our family, affecting our lifestyle and family finances.” (inconvenient pregnancy)

## Right Belief:

God has a plan for the child in my womb. My unborn baby is both loved by God and is an expression of God's love for me. I'm choosing to trust the Lord to meet my deepest inner needs.

- **Love:** God loves me, and He will provide healthy, loving relationships for me and for my baby.
- **Significance:** The Lord will accomplish His goals and His plans for my life and for my child's life.
- **Security:** Because the Lord is in control of my life, I can count on Him to walk with me and my baby each step of the way.

*"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. . . . Everyone who is called by my name . . . I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."  
(Isaiah 43:2, 7)*

## WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIP YOU NEED?

Many physical things that happen in life are unwanted or unplanned—such as a bee sting, a car crash, even a pregnancy. And some of our feelings are also unwanted—such as guilt, grief, sorrow, and shame. Many of these unwanted feelings are the result of our unwise choices . . . our self-willed living, which God calls sin. If you have never placed your trust in Jesus, your sin keeps you from having a relationship with God. He alone can give you the strength and support to handle an unplanned pregnancy.

## HOW TO HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THAT LASTS FOREVER

### #1 God's Purpose for You . . . is *Salvation*.

—What was God's motive in sending Christ to earth? To condemn you? No . . . to express His love for you by saving you!

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." (John 3:16-17)*

—What was Jesus' purpose in coming to earth? To make everything perfect and to remove all sin? No . . . to forgive your sins, empower you to have victory over sin, and enable you to live a fulfilled life!

*"I [Jesus] have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10)*

### #2 Your Problem . . . is *Sin*.

—What exactly is sin? Sin is living independently of God's standard—knowing what is right, but choosing wrong.

*"Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins." (James 4:17)*

—What is the major consequence of sin? Spiritual death, spiritual separation from God.

*"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."  
(Romans 6:23)*

### #3 God's Provision for You . . . is the *Savior*.

—Can anything remove the penalty for sin? Yes. Jesus died on the cross to personally pay the penalty for your sins.

*“God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)*

—What is the solution to being separated from God? Belief in Jesus Christ as the only way to God the Father.

*“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’” (John 14:6)*

### #4 Your Part . . . is *Surrender*.

—Place your faith in (rely on) Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior and reject your “good works” as a means of gaining God’s approval.

*“It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)*

—Give Christ control of your life, entrusting yourself to Him.

*“Jesus said to his disciples, ‘If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?’” (Matthew 16:24-26)*

The moment you choose to believe in Him—entrusting your life to Christ—He gives you His Spirit to live inside you. Then the Spirit of Christ gives you His power to live the fulfilled life God has planned for you. If you want to be fully forgiven by God and become the person God created you to be, you can tell Him in a simple, heartfelt prayer like this:

#### PRAYER OF SALVATION

*“God, I want a real relationship with You. I admit that many times I’ve chosen to go my own way instead of Your way. Please forgive me for my sins. Jesus, thank You for dying on the cross to pay the penalty for my sins. Come into my life to be my Lord and my Savior. Through Your power, begin healing the hurts in my heart. Teach me to trust in You alone to take care of me and my baby. Make me the person You created me to be.  
In Your holy name I pray. Amen.”*

#### WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT NOW?

If you sincerely prayed this prayer, look at what God’s Word says that He does for you!

*“Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”  
(Matthew 28:20)*



## IV. STEPS TO SOLUTION

You may feel overwhelmed, wishing you could turn back the clock or change the unexpected. Realize that Mary's pregnancy was also unexpected and, of course, "inconvenient" in light of the fact that Mary was not married. In spite of the critical eyes of others, what gave her the grace to go through her pregnancy with peace? It was the knowledge that her baby was actually a blessing. . . . Her baby was a gift from God. And she saw that her pregnancy was a part of God's plan.

You may be wondering, *How can my baby be a blessing rather than a burden?* Although your baby is not the Messiah, your little one has been created by God and is being formed by God according to His plan!

Now God has entrusted you with the ability and responsibility to bring this little life into the world. And just as the star in Bethlehem guided the wise men many centuries ago, God's Word will shed light, guiding you to find the best response to your pregnancy.

*"The unfolding of your words gives light; it  
gives understanding to the simple."  
(Psalm 119:130)*

### A. Key Verse to Memorize

*"He will bless the fruit of your womb."  
(Deuteronomy 7:13)*

### B. Key Passage to Read and Reread

Psalm 139

God's Presence in My Pregnancy

I am not alone in this unplanned pregnancy. My God . . .

- Knows me intimately. .... v. 1
- Knows what I am thinking. .... v. 2
- Knows what is happening to me. .... v. 3
- Knows what I will say before I speak. .... v. 4
- Will surround me with protection. .... v. 5
- Has knowledge beyond my understanding. .... v. 6
- Is available wherever I need Him. .... v. 7
- Is always with me. .... v. 8
- Will guide me wherever I go. .... v. 10
- Will keep me secure. .... v. 10
- Will shed light on my darkness. .... vv. 11-12
- Knows and planned my baby. .... v. 13
- Is shaping my baby's body and soul. .... v. 13
- Is making my baby into something wonderful. .... v. 14
- Can see what I can't see—the baby in my womb. .... v. 15

- Can see my baby's unformed body. .... v. 16
- Knew of this pregnancy even before I was born. .... v. 16
- Thinks precious thoughts about me. .... v. 17
- Thinks about me beyond what I can imagine. .... v. 18
- Will never leave me. .... v. 18
- Knows my anxious thoughts. .... v. 23
- Will lead me from the wrong way to the way that is right. .... v. 24

## C. What Are All Your Options?<sup>6</sup>

Your pregnancy may leave you feeling trapped, as though you have no good options. Actually, there is an option that will provide the best solution for you in the midst of your crisis. An informed decision now can save you much sorrow later. Ultimately, three options are available—**abortion**, **parenting**, and **adoption**. Carefully and prayerfully consider each option before you decide so that your decision won't leave you with a lifetime of regret.

*"The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple [the foolish] keep going and suffer for it."  
(Proverbs 27:12)*

### #1 The Option of Abortion

#### Lana's Story

Lana and her boyfriend were both high school seniors and neither had learned to curb their sexual appetites. All their friends who were "going steady" were sexually active, and since none of their friends became pregnant, they thought, *Why should we worry?* Then one day, when the moment of truth came crashing down, panic flooded her emotions. Even though Lana knew it was wrong, she still aborted her baby. She violated her conscience by assuming that abortion was actually her only option. The counselor at the clinic reassured her, "It's not a baby; it's just a mass of tissue." Yet, deep in her heart, Lana knew differently.

Although 15 years later, Lana says, "I'm fine," she lives with flashbacks of guilt and grief. Every year as the anniversary of the abortion approaches, Lana goes into a dark depression. Until all the emotional residue is resolved, Lana will remain an emotional cripple. And until the guilt and the grief are healed, she won't be all God wants her to be. Lana says today that, although abortion may be legal, that does not make it right, because she realizes her baby is God's baby first.

*"Your hands made me and formed me; give me  
understanding to learn your commands."  
(Psalm 119:73)*

Before considering an abortion, honestly answer the following questions and carefully consider the accompanying truths.

- Are you afraid that the response of others will be ridicule or rejection?  
**Realize** . . . it is wiser to fear the response of God than the response of people.
- Are you being pressured, especially by parents, the baby's father, or abortion counselors?  
**Realize** . . . there is no easy way out, and doing what God says is more important than doing what people say.

- Are you concerned about problems in your relationship with the baby's father?  
*Realize . . . if the father truly loves you, he will support you emotionally.*
- Are you wanting to escape the reminder that you made a major mistake?  
*Realize . . . God wants your child to be a reminder of His sovereignty and His purposes, not of your mistake.*
- Are you afraid of the financial responsibility and care of your baby?  
*Realize . . . God will provide for you and your baby.*
- Are you reluctant to bring an unwanted child into the world?  
*Realize . . . every child is wanted by God, and you can choose to want to have your child.*
- Are you concerned about possible health problems of the baby?  
*Realize . . . the value of life is not related to the health of the baby but to the God-given value placed on this baby by the Creator of life.*
- Are you unaware that life begins at conception?  
*Realize . . . a separate life begins when a woman's egg and a man's sperm are joined.*
- Are you viewing abortion as a form of birth control?  
*Realize . . . abortion kills a life, which is different from preventing the conception of a life.*
- Are you wanting to get rid of a baby who is a result of a wrongful act such as rape or incest?  
*Realize . . . your baby is innocent of any wrongful act and is undeserving of the death penalty.*

Terminating an innocent life will not end your grief but will rather compound your grief with guilt.

*“There is a way that seems right to a man,  
but in the end it leads to death.”  
(Proverbs 14:12)*

## **Q “Since it’s legal, isn’t abortion the best way to solve all of my problems?”**

**A** Terminating a pregnancy through killing an innocent life may seem to solve the problem, but it only creates more problems. Those who choose abortion often have multiplied sadness and sorrow, guilt and regret. The Bible says,

*“Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.” (2 Corinthians 7:10)*

**#2 The Option of Parenting** (single parenting a child, marrying for the sake of the child, or raising a child within a marriage)

**Lisa's Story**

Lisa attracted many young men seeking her favor. After beginning a great summer job, she became involved with an older man. She knew she was playing with fire, but he kept reassuring her, "Everything will be okay."

But at the end of the summer, he deserted his "summer fling," and she had to face her parents and her pregnancy—alone. Since neither she nor her parents approved of abortion, she worked and saved in order to take on the "single parenting" role. After having her baby, she learned that single parenting was a hard challenge: working, paying for childcare, and facing childrearing alone.

Even if she had married the father of the child, marriages based strictly on a pregnancy are rarely successful. But because Lisa had parental support and because she chose to live her life in a way that was pleasing to God, the Lord blessed her commitment.

While the majority of birth mothers choose to keep their babies, you need to answer a number of significant questions before you can determine whether this option is best for you.<sup>7</sup>

*"Blessed are all who fear the LORD, who walk in his ways."  
(Psalm 128:1)*

• **Single Parenting a Child**

Parenting requires emotional maturity. A parent is a mother or a father with the responsibility to be a provider and a protector of a child. Parenting a child means obligating yourself to physically raise, emotionally nurture, and spiritually train a son or daughter—often at great sacrifice to your own independence. Even the "virtuous woman" is described in this way . . .

*"She gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family."  
(Proverbs 31:15)*

- Do I have a network of family or friends who can support me in my decision?
- Can I raise my child while living with my parents?
- How do my parents feel about helping me with my child?
- What financial resources or assistance do I have available to help take care of my baby?
- Can I handle caring for a child plus my work/school responsibilities?
- Am I able to give the time and attention that my child needs?
- Can I provide an adequate and safe home for my baby where I am now living?
- What goals would I have to delay or give up to raise my child?

*"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."  
(Philippians 2:4)*

- **Marrying for the Sake of the Child**

If you are considering marrying the father—or someone else—pregnancy must not be the primary reason to marry. You need to have similar commitments, goals, and values. The Bible says,

*“Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?”  
(Amos 3:3)*

- Would an immediate marriage now be wise in the long-term?
- Am I in a good place to consider marriage?
- Would my husband love my child and be a good role model?
- Can he financially support the baby and me?
- Does he like and want children?
- Is he someone with whom I would like to spend the rest of my life?
- Do I feel led by the Lord to marry him?
- Do we share core spiritual values?

If you **are** considering marriage, first obtain premarital counseling. And be aware that 75 % of teenage marriages end in divorce. In order to consider marrying, you both need to have the same spiritual foundation or your marriage may fall apart.

*“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. . . . What fellowship can light have with darkness? . . . What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?”  
(2 Corinthians 6:14-15)*

- **Raising a Child within a Marriage**

If you are married and contemplating keeping your child, realize that God’s best is that both mother and father be actively involved in the parenting of children.

*“Listen, my son, to your father’s  
instruction and do not forsake your  
mother’s teaching.”  
(Proverbs 1:8)*

To determine your biblical accountability as parents, ask yourselves the following questions:

- Will we unconditionally accept, love, and nurture our child regardless of any physical problems?
- Will we approach parenting with common goals and purposes?
- Will we take every opportunity to teach our child spiritual truth?
- Will we clearly instruct our child by doing what is ethically right and just?
- Will we plan ahead to protect our child from danger?
- Will we provide for our child’s material needs?
- Will we lovingly and effectively discipline our child?
- Will we regard our child as a blessing?

Although you may not see it now, the baby in your womb is a gift from God and will be a blessing in your life.

*“Sons are a heritage from the LORD,  
children a reward from him.”  
(Psalm 127:3)*

### **Q “Why have I been desperate?”**

**A** Your desperate need for love and intimacy caused you to ignore the truth and to believe you could get your need met through immoral love without any consequences. The seduction of sin convinces us that we can satisfy our needs without God. Indeed, God created us all with this need for love, but His plan was and is to meet our love needs through an intimate relationship with Himself. He says,

*“I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.”  
(Jeremiah 31:3)*

### **#3 The Option of Adoption**

#### **Linda’s Story**

Linda was lonely and desperate for love. The physical closeness with a young man seemed to fill the empty place in her heart. Her craving for affection resulted in a premature sexual relationship . . . and an unplanned pregnancy.

What now? Abortion was never an option, and with marriage or single parenting out of the picture, her choices had narrowed to one . . . **adoption**. Linda knew that adoption was by far the best choice, especially for the baby. She learned about the new freedoms within “open adoption,” the many rights of the birth mother, and the blessing for her child to be raised in a healthy, two-parent home. Many infertile couples desperately want a child, and Linda’s choice was an answer to the prayers of one of those couples.

While the advantages of adoption are considerable, fewer than 2 % of women with an unwanted pregnancy choose adoption as their best option.<sup>8</sup> The emotional attachment to the baby growing inside a pregnant woman creates a longing for motherhood that can overshadow all other considerations. However, adoption opens the door for your child to be loved and cared for by a loving, caring family.

*“God sets the lonely in families.”  
(Psalm 68:6)*

## **Q What Are the Advantages of Adoption?<sup>9</sup>**

- A**
- Are you aware that while birth mothers experience the grief of loss, they can have more peace by knowing that their child will be raised in a loving and stable environment?
  - Are you aware that adoption often provides the best and most stable environment for the baby?
  - Are you aware that adoption can be an answer to prayer for the many childless couples who are eagerly seeking to love and care for a child?
  - Are you aware that there are more couples wanting to adopt a baby than there are babies available for adoption?
  - Are you aware that birth mothers who prepare an adoption plan are more likely to get an education, get a job, and get married?
  - Are you aware that when a baby is placed for adoption, all birth expenses are paid?
  - Are you aware that you can choose your child's family and get to know them personally?
  - Are you aware that you can stay in contact with the couple who adopts your child through letters and pictures?
  - Are you aware that you can visit with your child at specific, agreed upon times?
  - Are you aware that adoption can be the highest expression of spiritual love? Adoption reflects the loving relationship of God with all who accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Those who accept Christ are "adopted" into the family of God. The Bible says, "*He predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will*" (Ephesians 1:5).

Note: Your adoption facilitator can help you decide what is best for you.

## **Q "How can a mother who loves her unborn baby give the baby up when the child is born?"**

- A** God the Father gave up His Son, Jesus, based on His sacrificial love. In a similar way, a birth mother allows her baby to be placed in another home based on her sacrificial love. She desires the child's very best, and she has come to understand that she cannot provide what is best. Just as God's actions were based on love, her actions are also based on love.

*"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers." (1 John 3:16)*

## D. Is the Baby's Father Part of the Equation?

Fathers can be forgotten, ignored, or simply left out when an unplanned, unwanted pregnancy appears on the horizon. After all, his appearance won't change. . . . His health won't be risked. . . . His career won't be curtailed. The sad truth is that many unmarried fathers abandon the relationship, leaving the pregnant mother to handle everything alone. Even within a marriage, some husbands demand that their wives get abortions. Although fathers respond differently, they play a significant role in regard to their babies—with legal rights, emotional needs, and highest accountability to God.

*"If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."  
(1 Timothy 5:8)*

## TYPES OF SITUATIONS THAT INVOLVE AN UNMARRIED, BIOLOGICAL FATHER

- **When the relationship has open communication:**
  - Do each of you accept responsibility for the pregnancy?
  - Have you each asked for the other's forgiveness?
  - Do you accept your financial responsibility?
  - Are one or both of you considering an abortion?
  - Is adoption open for consideration?
  - Are you considering marriage? (If so, counseling is recommended.)
  - Do you both understand that pregnancy should never be the primary reason to marry?
- **When marriage is considered:<sup>10</sup>**
  - Do you both truly want to get married?
  - How does she feel about being a wife and mother?
  - How does he feel about being a husband and father?
  - Do you love each other enough to remain committed and faithful for life?
  - Are you both committed to the child's future?
  - Are both sets of grandparents supportive?
  - Will one or both of you continue schooling?
  - Where will you live?
  - Who will provide living expenses?
  - Who will pay the prenatal care and delivery expenses?
- **When adoption is considered:<sup>11</sup>**
  - Sometimes the biological father is required to sign a release if there is an adoption.
  - Some fathers disagree with the mother's decision to make an adoption plan.
  - In some situations, the father may refuse to surrender his rights, declaring that if the mother does not keep the baby, he will.
  - If the choice is made to not name the father, the adoption process is at risk if the unnamed father later appears.

- **When single parenting is considered:**

- If the father desires to keep the child, he must sign a notarized form claiming paternity and his desire for paternal rights.
- He must then appear in court, with an attorney, in order to initiate action to establish paternity.
- He must also present his child-care plan to the court.
- This procedure will make him financially responsible for the child and for all the medical bills of the mother.

- **When paternity is denied:<sup>12</sup>**

- The father of the baby could be named without any proof, but legally he has the right to deny paternity and sign that he is not the baby's father. A specific medical test, however, can conclusively prove or disprove the issue of paternity.
- An "alleged father" also has the option to sign "a surrender for the born child" or "a surrender for the unborn child."
- Another option for an uncooperative father is to sign a form that surrenders all his parental rights.
- When an alleged father refuses to sign a "surrender," he can be given written notice by an attorney of his presumed rights. If he does not respond, his rights will be legally terminated by default. Knowing this is important because some birth mothers won't consider adoption, thinking that the birth father has to sign certain papers and knowing that she can't get him to sign anything.

- **When abortion is considered:**

- The father is expected to be financially responsible for an unplanned child, yet he has no rights or responsibilities in regard to abortion.
- Many fathers deeply grieve when their children are aborted, especially when they were never told of the pregnancies.
- Men are programmed with God-given instincts to procreate, provide, and protect; therefore, an abortion leaves many fathers angry and unfulfilled.
- Even if they never acknowledge it, men often experience depression, anger, sorrow, remorse, and guilt after an abortion.

**Q "The father of my unborn baby has no conscience or emotional involvement regarding this new life for which he is partially responsible. Is he able to simply walk away with no feelings of remorse or a guilty conscience?"**

**A** If a biological father ignores his responsibilities during a crisis pregnancy, emotional roadblocks are set up that can sabotage his own future, healthy relationships with women. Running from responsibility will later show up as anger at God, frustration with life, weak decision making, poor coping skills, and low self-worth. Regardless of how he appears, his irresponsibility will have a dramatic effect on his life. The Bible says,

*"The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)*

## **E. Wisdom for the Expectant Mother**

The pressure surrounding an unplanned pregnancy can seem overwhelming. You may feel you must make a quick decision in order to resolve a difficult dilemma, but a bad, quick decision will produce long-term grief. Making the best decision for both you and your unborn baby requires wisdom and foresight.

*“The advantage of knowledge is this: that wisdom preserves the life of its possessor.”  
(Ecclesiastes 7:12)*

### **WISDOM**

**Write down your thoughts and feelings, admitting your anxiety, confessing any guilt, and casting your cares on the Lord.**

*“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:6-7)*

**Imagine what life would be like for you and your baby in the short-term (next year) and in the long-term (ten years from now) if you followed each option (abortion, parenting, adoption).**

*“The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought to their ways.” (Proverbs 14:8)*

**Sort through your options in terms of what God has revealed about your baby’s life and what is best for your child.**

*“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.” (Psalm 32:8)*

**Develop a support structure of family and friends.**

*“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.” (Proverbs 17:17)*

**Obtain godly counsel that lines up with what God says in His Word.**

*“The mouth of the righteous man utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks what is just.” (Psalm 37:30)*

**Make a decision to entrust your future and your baby’s future into the hands of the Lord.**

*“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.” (Proverbs 3:5-6)*

## F. Common Concerns and Solid Solutions

Even after prayerfully considering your options and spending the needed time to make a wise decision, you will certainly be faced with a myriad of concerns regarding how your decision will impact your child, the birth father, your family, and your future. While many voices will try to direct your steps, only God's solutions will provide trustworthy light in the midst of your darkness. King David attested to the trustworthiness of this truth about God's Word. . . .

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."  
(Psalm 119:105)*

## UNFAIRNESS TO THE CHILD

**Q** "Based on my situation, isn't it unfair to bring a child into the world at this time?"

**A** Adjustments must be made for a child born into a less-than-ideal situation, but there are good options that will make the situation better for you and your child. Fairness is not the basis for deciding whether or not to bring an unborn child into the world. If God has allowed you to become pregnant and if He is a caring God, then He has already ordained that it is fair, no matter how it may appear to you now.

*"The LORD is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made." (Psalm 145:17)*

## PREMARITAL PREGNANCY

**Q** "How can I face the reaction of people in my life?"

**A** No matter what we do, there will always be people who will be unkind to us. Determine that you will show respect, even to those who are disrespectful. Live in dependence on Jesus and the love He has for you. With Christ in you, you have the power to respond in a right way to those who are wrong.

- Speak well of those who hurt you.

*"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse." (Romans 12:14)*

- Forgive those who grieve you.

*"Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." (Colossians 3:13)*

- Love those who are against you.

*"Love your enemies." (Matthew 5:44)*

- Pray for those who persecute you.

*"Pray for those who persecute you." (Matthew 5:44)*

## SINGLE PARENTING

### Q “How do I fill the void of a father figure for my baby?”

**A** Don't try to be both mother and father. God did not design you to be a father, either physically or emotionally. Just be the best mom you can be, and let your heavenly Father play His unique role in your child's life. David specifically calls the Lord *“a father to the fatherless”* (Psalm 68:5). This is the compassionate part He promises to play . . . and there could be no better Father!

*“You, O God, do see trouble and grief; you consider it to take it in hand. The victim commits himself to you; you are the helper of the fatherless.” (Psalm 10:14)*

When raising your child, reinforce the Father image of God with . . .

- **Scriptures** of His guidance (See Psalm 25:4-5.)
- **Songs** of His sovereignty (See Psalm 59:17.)
- **Words** of His watch care (See Psalm 121.)
- **Prayers** for His provision (See Philippians 4:19.)

## FATHER OF THE CHILD

### Q “As the baby's father, what is my responsibility to the mother and child?”

**A** A substantial number of fathers are unresponsive to unplanned, unwanted pregnancies. By refusing to accept paternity, by deserting or becoming abusive, a father shirks his God-given responsibility. Every father should share both the burden of decision making and the weight of financial responsibility of bearing and birthing a child.

*“If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” (1 Timothy 5:8)*

## G. Encouragement for Parents in Pain

An unplanned, unwanted pregnancy can have a rippling effect throughout the entire family. Certain family members can be stunned and not know how to react. Consider the following steps to walk through, one step at a time, and the following words to say in an effort to support your child.

*“Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”  
(Colossians 4:6)*

- **Call** the entire family together.  
Include grandparents and other close family members and talk through the situation. Invite them to participate by sharing their feelings and praying for the family.  
*“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” (Galatians 6:2)*
- **Concentrate** on the positive.  
Make and keep an ongoing list of every good and valuable aspect of the situation, no matter how insignificant it may seem.  
*“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” (Philippians 4:8)*
- **Consider** the worst thing that could happen.  
Carefully consider the options. Decide on a course of action for the worst possible problem you might face. Then leave the results to the Lord.  
*“All a man’s ways seem right to him, but the LORD weighs the heart. To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.” (Proverbs 21:2-3)*
- **Count** on various forms of rejection.  
Do not expect others to accept the circumstances or to support your decisions during this difficult time.  
*“Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me. Teach me your way, O LORD; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors.” (Psalm 27:10-11)*
- **Cherish** God’s Word in your heart.  
Memorize and meditate on Scripture for your source of strength and security.  
*“My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life.” (Psalm 119:50)*
- **Cast** every care upon God in prayer.  
Begin a prayer journal. Be honest and specific in communicating your concerns to God. Thank God for what He will do in your situation.  
*“Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.” (Psalm 55:22)*
- **Cultivate** consistency through a normal family routine.  
Do not stop functioning as a family unit, but continue to live each day as you did before.  
*“God is not a God of disorder but of peace.” (1 Corinthians 14:33)*
- **Choose** to practice forgiveness.  
Learn to let go of the past and pursue peace through the process of forgiveness.  
*“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:32)*
- **Claim** this as an opportunity to be used for God’s glory and for the good of your own family.  
Turn this trauma into a special time of closeness with your loved one and use it as a ministry of great eternal value.  
*“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.” (2 Corinthians 5:17-18)*

- **Come** to accept that these changes in your life are permanent.

Embrace the challenge and allow God to conform you to His image through these circumstances.

*“The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your love, O LORD, endures forever.” (Psalm 138:8)*

**Q “How important is my response to the news that my child has an unplanned pregnancy?”**

**A** How you respond to an unplanned pregnancy is crucial to your personal growth and maturity. . . . Your humble response can ultimately move you closer to the heart of God. He says,

*“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!”  
(Isaiah 43:18-19)*

## **H. Do’s and Don’ts for Family and Friends**

We all want to know how to appropriately encourage someone struggling with the weight of an unwanted pregnancy. Often the burden of guilt, fear, or anxiety makes the mother particularly sensitive to misguided words. Therefore, we need to be especially careful to build bridges that will strengthen our relationship with her and be used by God to meet her needs.

*“Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.”  
(Proverbs 12:18)*

**Don’t** use shame.

**Do** . . . Give emotional support.

*“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”  
(1 Thessalonians 5:11)*

**Don’t** be judgmental or condemning.

**Do** . . . See the immense need for a real friend.

*“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10)*

**Don’t** be surprised by the anger you feel.

**Do** . . . Expect to feel anger as a natural response to . . .

- Injustice
- Hurt
- Fear
- Frustration

But then resolve your anger by giving it to God.

*“In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.”  
(Ephesians 4:26)*

**Don't** hold on to hopes and dreams that are no longer possible.

**Do . . .** Let go of the past and trust God for the future.

*"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland." (Isaiah 43:18-19)*

**Don't** accept responsibility for the final decision.

**Do . . .** Listen and discuss available options and their consequences.

*"So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God." (Romans 14:12)*

**Don't** pressure yourself or be pressured by others to make unwise decisions.

**Do . . .** Trust in the Lord to lead you.

*"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." (Proverbs 3:5-6)*

## CONCLUSION

*Is your pregnancy unplanned? By understanding God's hand in your life and in forming your unborn baby, like Mary, you can be at peace with bringing life into the world. Consider what would have happened if Mary had chosen to terminate the life of her baby. God forbid! But that thought was never in the mind of Mary. You have been entrusted with a special gift. Even if your little one was unplanned, in time you will see that God has a precious plan for your child—a plan beyond what your mind can conceive.*

—June Hunt



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## NOTES

1. For this section see Maryland General Hospital, "Fetal Development," <http://www.marylandgeneralhospital.com/ency/article/002398.htm> (accessed January 5, 2004).
2. For the following section see A.L.L. (*American Life Lobby*) *Issues*, March 1984, 19; Focus on the Family, *The First Nine Months*, LF177 (n.p.: n.p., 1989); "The Inside Story: 40 Weeks of Fetal Development," 2001, *Parents.com*, <http://www.parents.com/articles/pregnancy/1182.jsp>.
3. For this section see Martha Zimmerman, *Should I Keep My Baby?* rev. ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1997), 7.
4. For this section see Henrietta VanDerMolen, *Pregnant & Alone: How You Can Help an Unwed Friend*, Heart and Hand (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw, 1989), 2-3; Frederica Mathewes-Green, *Real Choices: Offering Practical, Life-Affirming Alternatives to Abortion* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1994), 131-34.
5. On the three God-given inner needs, see Lawrence J. Crabb, Jr., *Understanding People: Deep Longings for Relationship*, Ministry Resources Library (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 15-16; Robert S. McGee, *The Search for Significance*, 2nd ed. (Houston, TX: Rapha, 1990), 27-30.
6. American Pregnancy Association, "My Three Choices," <http://www.americanpregnancy.org/unplannedpregnancy/my3choices.html>; Sylvia Boothe, *No Easy Choices: The Dilemma of Crisis Pregnancy* (Birmingham, AL: New Hope, 1990), 23-56; Carolyn Owens and Linda Roggow, *Pregnant and Single*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Pyranee, 1990), 31-43; VanDerMolen, *Pregnant & Alone*, 35-88.
7. See Kathy S. Stolley, "Statistics on Adoption in the United States," *The Future of Children* 3, no. 1 (1993): 26-42, [http://www.futureofchildren.org/usr\\_doc/vol3no1ART2.PDF](http://www.futureofchildren.org/usr_doc/vol3no1ART2.PDF).
8. Stolley, "Statistics on Adoption," 32.
9. Boothe, *No Easy Choices*, 43-56; Mathewes-Green, *Real Choices*, 128.
10. Boothe, *No Easy Choices*, 34-35.
11. VanDerMolen, *Pregnant & Alone*, 18-21.
12. VanDerMolen, *Pregnant & Alone*, 18-21.

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### **Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)**

*“For I know the **plans** I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘**plans to prosper** you and not to harm you, **plans** to give you **hope** and a **future**.”*

### **Psalms 103:10-12 (NIV)**

*“He does not treat us as our **sins** deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his **love** for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he **removed** our transgressions from us.”*

### **Isaiah 54:5-6 (NIV)**

*“For your Maker is your **husband**—the LORD Almighty is his name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth. The LORD will call you back as if you were a **wife** deserted and distressed in spirit—a **wife** who married young, only to be **rejected**,’ says your God.”*

### **Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NIV)**

*“He has made everything **beautiful in its time**. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.”*

### **Isaiah 43:18-19 (NIV)**

*“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the **past**. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am **making a way** in the **desert** and **streams** in the **wasteland**.”*

### **Isaiah 41:10 (NIV)**

*“Do not **fear**, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will **strengthen** you and **help** you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”*

### **Psalms 10:14 (NIV)**

*“You, O God, do see **trouble and grief**; you **consider** it to take it in hand. The victim commits himself to you; you are the **helper** of the **fatherless**.”*

### **2 Timothy 2:22 (NIV)**

*“Flee the evil **desires** of youth, and **pursue** righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”*

### **2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)**

*“If anyone is in Christ, he is a **new** creation; the **old** has gone, the **new** has come!”*

### **Psalms 138:8 (NIV)**

*“The LORD will **fulfill his purpose for me**; your love, O LORD, endures forever—do not **abandon** the works of your hands.”*

How can I conquer the **fear** I feel, and  
where do I go for **help** and **strength**  
and to find someone to be with me  
through all of this?

*Pregnancy . . . Unplanned*



Is there still a **future** of **prosperity**  
for me in which I can **hope** and  
**plan** for good things?

*Pregnancy . . . Unplanned*



Who will be there to **help** my **fatherless**  
**child** and to take into **consideration** the  
**trouble** and **grief** ahead?

*Pregnancy . . . Unplanned*



Does God really **love** me enough to fully  
forgive my **sins** and **remove** them from me  
so that I can put them behind me? Will I  
have to pay for them for the rest of my life?

*Pregnancy . . . Unplanned*



What am I to do with the **desires** I have  
that got me in this trouble in the first place?  
What do **I pursue** in their place?

*Pregnancy . . . Unplanned*



What do I do with the **rejection** I feel  
and what about my dream of being the  
**wife** of a godly **husband**?

*Pregnancy . . . Unplanned*



How can I feel **new** and alive again instead  
of feeling **old** before my time?

*Pregnancy . . . Unplanned*



**In time**, will God make something  
**beautiful** of this situation with all this  
shame, pain, and remorse?

*Pregnancy . . . Unplanned*



Can the Lord still **fulfill His purpose for**  
**me** or has He **abandoned** me?

*Pregnancy . . . Unplanned*



What can I do to get beyond the **past**, to  
**make a way** for a new life, to bring **streams**  
into the "**desert** and the **wasteland**" that my  
life seems like now?

*Pregnancy . . . Unplanned*

