



How to Prevent Abortion

Vol. 17, No. 2 **MOST WOMEN WHO OBTAIN ABORTIONS** say they rarely attend church, if at all. According to the research, Protestants are actually under-represented in the population of women having abortions. But it's troubling to learn that "one in five abortion patients [of those who report a religious affiliation] identified themselves as born-again, evangelical, charismatic or fundamentalist."^{*}

The bottom line is, too many teens from Christian homes wind up at abortion clinics. They know having sex before marriage is wrong, but they don't want to disappoint their parents by admitting their sin or the pregnancy that results from it.

Their reaction is almost as old as time. After Adam and Eve sinned, their natural inclination was to hide and cover up. From Eden on, sin has driven us away from God and each other. Yet the good news is that the cross of Jesus Christ brings sinners back together and to God!

REDEEMED PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW BETTER, but sometimes our messages express an utter lack of grace: "Don't bother coming home if you get pregnant!" "I'll disown you if you ever humiliate me that way!" or "You'll be expelled from your Christian school!" . . . as though unwed pregnancy is the unpardonable sin.

Sometimes teens mistakenly *perceive* this is how parents and others will respond without anyone having said such a thing to them. It's appalling to think that babies have died as a result of a false assumption. Parents would be horrified and heartbroken to learn a grandchild has died on that basis. We need to be pro-active.

LET'S GET A FEW THINGS STRAIGHT:

- A) Sex is God's good gift, intended for the protective provision of marriage.
- B) Sexual sin is wrong whether it results in pregnancy or not.
- C) A baby is God's gift no matter how conceived.
- D) Human beings bear God's image at every stage of life.
- E) Children (born and unborn) should not be killed for a parent's sin.

Teens may be confused on these points and see ending a pregnancy as a way to avoid admitting sexual sin. Some parents of wayward teens may also see abortion as a way to preserve their reputations. The message that's too often heeded is this: "Get rid of the unborn baby and get rid of the problem."

Abortion does *not*, however, solve problems. It does not bring the freedom, joy, grace, acceptance, love, peace, blessing, and hope that confession of sin provides. No, instead it compounds the sin and sorrow.

HOW CAN WE SPARE EACH OTHER PAIN?

What messages can parents, churches, and Christian schools give teenagers to help them understand *both* the sinfulness of sex outside marriage *and* the futility of hiding a resulting pregnancy under the cloak of abortion? Can we encourage confession and pave the way for transformation long before our

children face these temptations? Here are six things we can do:

1 Leave doors of communication open: "You can talk to me about anything."

2 Express a willingness to help in times of trouble: "Whatever happens, we'll get through it together."

3 Be honest and mature about your emotions: "I may feel hurt and get angry when you disappoint me, but I'll never stop loving you."

4 Show mercy to people who confess sin (sexual or otherwise), following Paul's example in 2 Corinthians 2:5-8: "You are forgiven."

5 Demonstrate compassion to families who struggle with a teen's unplanned pregnancy: "How can I help?"

6 Celebrate every baby's life, regardless of how he or she was conceived: "Thank you for not choosing abortion!"

WHERE WILL A TEENAGER GO?

When she becomes pregnant outside marriage, will she go to her parents or to her friends? To the pregnancy care center or to Planned Parenthood? To her church or to the abortion clinic?

No one wants to become an unwitting accomplice in an abortion. Therefore, let's not abandon anyone to abortion through a thoughtless comment. Let's choose our messages wisely.

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**"Characteristics of U.S. Abortion Patients, 2008," Guttmacher Institute, May 2010, www.guttmacher.org/report/characteristics-us-abortion-patients-2008, accessed 6/22/2017; note that this would be 15 percent of the total number obtaining an abortion (20 percent of the 75 percent who report a religious affiliation). An earlier study found that 13 percent of women obtaining abortions call themselves 'born-again' or 'evangelical' (Jones et al., "Patterns in the Socioeconomic Characteristics of Women Obtaining Abortions in 2000-2001," *Perspectives on Sexual & Reproductive Health*, 34:5, September/October 2002, www.guttmacher.org/journals/psrh/2002/09/patterns-socioeconomic-characteristics-women-obtaining-abortions-2000-2001, accessed 6/22/2017). The pattern continued, for the most part, in the most recent report: "Characteristics of U.S. Abortion Patients in 2014 and Changes Since 2008," Guttmacher Institute, May 2016; www.guttmacher.org/report/characteristics-us-abortion-patients-2014, accessed 6/19/2017.



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