

Prescriptions for the Heart

Coping with an Unexpected Pregnancy

Nothing puts fear and uncertainty in the life of an unmarried woman like that of an unexpected pregnancy. Raising a child is hard work at any age, even when married, especially if you are young. You may be embarrassed and have fear of being cast out by your family or friends. Some may advise you to terminate the pregnancy. Others will give you other advice. In the midst of all these unknowns, rest assured that your doctor cares about your health and well being of your baby.

As with this and any problem, you can find the best guidance through God's Word. It is our hope that this biblically-based information will help you make all necessary decisions and to find hope and purpose in this major life-changing event.

If you are a Christian, you are God's child. [Note: If you do not know if you are a Christian, be sure to ask your doctor to help you understand what this means.] As believers, we are children of God, as it says in the gospel of John, "...to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision ... but born of God" (John 1:12-13).¹

As God's children and followers of Christ, our lives have a purpose. Nothing happens by chance for us, though sometimes we do experience the consequences of poor choices or bad judgment. No one is perfect, or ever has been, except Jesus. In fact, this is one reason that the Scriptures are full of stories of people who made bad choices that produced unplanned consequences, but with God's help, they were able to redeem something good from their bad situations.

Your developing baby also has a purpose. In fact, the Bible is clear that God already knows your baby. The psalmist David (whose own poor judgment once resulted in an unplanned pregnancy) wrote, long before there was ultrasound, "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you ... your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be" (Psalm 139:13-16). In another Scripture God says to the Prophet Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart ..." (Jeremiah 1:5).

What is true of prophets and psalmists is true of all of us, including you and your developing child. Your existence is not an accident. We are all created "in His image," and ultimately according to His will. This means that just as God loves you and sent His Son to pay the penalty for all your sins – past, present, and future – God also loves your baby who deserves the same love and security that God gives you.

The challenge of an unplanned pregnancy is learning to cope with the burden of responsibility for the well being of the child, and this may involve a number of very difficult decisions, starting with the decision to allow the child to be born. If you do not feel that you can raise the child by yourself, or your

family is not willing or able to help you, there are a number of agencies who can help ensure that your child will be properly cared for by loving adoptive parents. Your doctor can put you in communication with one of these agencies.

Heart-wrenching as a decision may be to allow your baby to be adopted, this is a far more responsible, God-honoring, and life-affirming choice than some others that are available to you. Your doctor may be able to recommend some resources that will help you become better informed regarding your options. The process of deciding what to do next should involve prayer and the advice of wise and experienced social and spiritual counselors. For if you make your decision after considering all the options, and your counselors and family affirm this decision as the wisest choice for you and the baby, you will most likely experience a much more settled sense of peace with the decision, long-term.

Whether you decide to raise your child within your family, or that adoption would be best, your doctor will be there to support you.

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