

Choosing the Best for You and Your Baby

*Pastor J. Otis Ledbetter with Pastoral Insights
from Kurt Bruner, The Center for Strong Families*

It's a jarring shift for a woman to go from processing a relationship that has become sexual to trying to figure out what to do about a newly conceived life. Even if you've always believed that life is precious and that babies deserve the chance to live, experiencing an unplanned pregnancy yourself can be overwhelming. You find that it's more complex than just a yes or no decision. All the things that are at stake, added to the hormones that are likely affecting your emotions, can leave you feeling confused and afraid. What should you consider as you try to decide the best options for both you and this new life?

CONSIDERATION #1: The gift of life

Every human life has value regardless of the circumstances. That goes for you and your baby. You were both created in the image of God and were fearfully and wonderfully made. All of your days were written in God's book before one of them came to be (Psalm 139:13-16). Even though you don't know your future or the future of this baby's life, your decisions affect both. Pray that God will help you make choices that preserve His best for both of you—to allow you both to experience the full life He offers. As Jesus said, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10).

CONSIDERATION #2: The responsibilities ahead

If you've chosen to give birth to your baby, you have already taken a heroic step. But that's just the beginning. Now you must decide who will raise this child. There is great responsibility involved in caring for a child in both the short- and long-term. Being a parent means learning to lay down your life as a servant for your child (Philippians 2:3-7). Many mothers choose to take on this responsibility alone. Single mothers usually find, however, that the responsibilities are greater than they ever imagined and that despite the sacrifices they make, their children are left with great disadvantages.

If you hope to raise this child yourself, you should pray about where the child's father fits in. A father can make all the difference in a child's life—for better or worse. Often, an unplanned pregnancy can uncover a man's true character and make it clear whether or not he has the courage and discipline to be a good husband or father. There are times, however, when a man who has been irresponsible about sex outside of marriage can still become the man you and your child need. With a lot of work and Biblical counsel, it's possible to make even an unplanned family work.

CONSIDERATION #3: The hope of redemption

God is in the business of turning situations that feel like a mess into "happily ever after" stories. Having your child's father commit to the long-term responsibilities of marriage and parenting can provide a hopeful story of redemption. When that's not the case, however, the best hope for your child may be adoption by parents who are prepared for the responsibilities ahead. There can be great heartache in holding your new baby and then handing it over to someone else, but it's often the best choice you can make for your child's future. It also can be an answer to prayer for the couple who hopes to adopt children.

An Unplanned Pregnancy

GOING FURTHER - Resources

Recommended Book:

I'm Pregnant-Now What? (by Ruth Graham, daughter of evangelist Billy Graham) speaking from her experience helping two daughters through teen pregnancies. Co-author Sara Dormon, Ph.D., brings a broad range of insights to help women come up with an informed, workable plan for getting through an unplanned pregnancy.

Recommended Websites:

OptionLine.org offers trained consultants who can provide direction as well as connections to local pregnancy centers staffed to give you Biblical and confidential care. In addition, *CrisisPregnancy.com* offers an exhaustive collection of articles and links regarding your pregnancy, adoption issues, and support for each step.

Pregnancy Care Center

169 N. Clark

Fresno, CA 93701

Across from Community Regional Medical Center

(559) 237-0683

www.pregnancycenter.com

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