

SHOULD CHRISTIANS USE CONTRACEPTION?

By Denver Cheddie

It is believed that any couple which does not use some form of contraception will bear 15 – 20 children in their lifetime. Thus everyone uses some form of contraception. Yet there are those who deliberately desist from using condoms, the pill or any other artificial means of contraception. They pile on children by the litter, and often have more than they could handle financially, emotionally and otherwise. The Catholic Church has a strict policy against contraception. But they also believe that sex is solely for procreation, and not recreation. Let us examine some scriptures that indirectly address the issue.

In Gen. 1:28; 9:7, God commanded, "Be fruitful and multiply". If that command were given to all men of all time (including Paul the apostle), then that settles it. Contraception is contrary to the Word of God, because the whole point of contraception is to avoid having too many children. But Jesus teaches us not to just ask **what** the Bible says, but **why** it says it (Matt. 19:8). Why did God give that command to be fruitful and multiply? The reason is revealed in the text itself – to replenish the earth. An interesting observation is that that command was directly given by God to two groups of people in the Bible: 1) Adam and Eve, 2) Noah and his family. What do Adam and Noah have in common? They were both the beginning of a new generation of life on earth. God did not want just a handful of people, but a great multitude that would call upon His name. The earth is currently

overpopulated. Obviously the why of this command has already been fulfilled.

In Gen. 38:9, 10 we read a story of a man called Onan. God killed his brother Er because he was too wicked. But Onan also erred and was killed by God. He was commanded to lie with his deceased brother's wife and produce offspring for him. This was just an OT custom. He knew the offspring would be his brother's and not his, so he ejaculated on the floor. God was displeased with what he did, and killed him. It would be a stretch to conclude that God was displeased with Onan because he practiced contraception. The problem with Onan was that he did not want to raise children for his brother, but he did want to have sex with his brother's wife. God killed him not for practicing contraception, but for disobedience and for using God's command as an occasion to fulfill the lusts of his flesh. He was guilty not of family planning, but of despising God's command.

Psalm 127:3-5 seems to encourage men to have many children. But it must be remembered that in the OT, children were a measure of God's blessing. The more one had, the more favorably one was looked upon. This scripture was also written in a time when it was easier to make a living and sustain a family than it is now. That passage is best understood as teaching that we should have as many children as we can afford. Such advice is most invaluable today.

I would conclude that Christians may use contraception wisely. There are forms that may be equivalent to abortion and such should be avoided.

However the same cannot be said of all. I think contraception is a God-sent blessing to our generation. It is so much better to plan a family than to have more children than you could handle. You would only be doing them an injustice. The earth is already replenished, we don't have to worry about that anymore. Just as arrows in the hands of a warrior, we should skillfully direct our children in the way that they should go. It is better to have a few children and to raise them right, than to have many only to populate hell.

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