

COUNSELING A FRIEND CONSIDERING ABORTION



Being the friend that confronts hard things is vital. Abortion is marketed as a solution to an unexpected pregnancy. Women and men are told they have control over their bodies, a preborn baby is just a clump of cells, and abortion is a human right. As followers of Christ, we know this is far from the truth revealed by God through Scripture and science.

After an abortion, most women and men are not prepared for the physical, emotional, and spiritual impact. What initially felt like relief may be replaced by intense feelings of guilt, shame, pain, anger, or numbness. Some suffer in silence for years, or even decades, from the consequences of their decision to end their child's life. We must speak up in love to rescue those taken away to death (Proverbs 24:11). In talking with someone who is considering an abortion, remember the following Biblical insights:

God created and cares about ALL life. While the preborn is the most vulnerable person in this situation, start by focusing on your friend. Their life began at the point of fertilization and bears God's image, placing intrinsic value on them. Remind your friend their worth is not dependent on their worldly success or the gravity of their sin, but that God created them and this child in his image. God says his design in creating every human in his image is very good (Genesis 1:27, Genesis 1:31).

Listen and acknowledge. Be an active listener and avoid texting or emails that could be misconstrued. In person or over the phone, acknowledge their feelings while taking opportunities to clarify facts. Be careful to not say, "I'm sorry" when she or he reveals the pregnancy. Rather acknowledge the humanity of life she is carrying with statements like, "Congratulations. How far along are you?" Strategically focus on her or him first, then the child, and then the Gospel (1 Peter 3:15).

Circumstances are real. Pregnancy and parenting is hard and costly, and if caring for a baby is not something they have the flexibility or foresight to do, abortion can appear to be the best choice. Only we do not compromise ending anyone's life because their care is too hard or costly... not a pregnant woman's or a preborn child's. So, be firm about sharing the truth while recognizing tangible solutions. Divide up the most pressing issues at hand, rather than letting them all bear down at once; then take them one at a time. Talking to the other parent and their parents could be a major barrier you can help mediate and support. Your friend is more capable than they realize, but they will likely need more help than they have to love this baby, whether through parenting or adoption. They may not have many people speaking this truth over them. Be a voice of encouragement and confidence (James 2:14-17, 1 John 3:18).

Consider more than the circumstances. Feelings are real, but not reliable. Your friend may feel like abortion fixes their uncertainty, hardship, or shame and ending their child's life is a compromise they're willing to make even if it leaves a path of regret or pain in its wake. Your friend's circumstances are not an end to his or her life, but abortion ends another's life. Remind them of your love for them, and gently ask, "Do you know what is involved in abortion at your stage of pregnancy?" Be clear on what abortion is as either a medical or surgical procedure and the implications to them and their child (Exodus 20:13, Psalm 139:13-16, Jeremiah 7:31).

Grace changes everything. God sees us in the midst of our pain, brokenness, and unexpected circumstances. He not only sees us but loves us deeply and is working out his sovereign plan in our lives in ways we rarely see in the moment. Jesus died to rescue us because we can't rescue ourselves. The Gospel truth extends to every human being – you, your friend, and the baby in her womb that God is uniquely forming and sustaining (2 Samuel 14:14; Romans 5:8).

Engage thoughtfully and consistently. Ask good questions and check-in each day the first week or two after they share she is pregnant and at least once a week afterwards. Your friend is likely at least halfway through the first trimester (6 weeks) when they find out she is pregnant. Encourage prenatal care and offer to go to any appointments. In the state of Texas, a woman is required to receive a sonogram at least 24 hours before an abortion procedure, and she cannot abort after 22 weeks. This does not mean she can't seek an abortion in another state like New Mexico where abortions are legal until birth. A local pregnancy center like Thrive Women's Clinic or Human Coalition's virtual clinic is the best option to get a sonogram because they won't refer her to get an abortion. In summary, be a good friend (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12).

DO:

- Listen and eliminate distractions.
- Acknowledge feelings.
- Physically comfort and encourage them.
- Discern barriers that prevent choosing life.
- Speak of parenting in an empowering way.
- Circle back to the Gospel.
- Pray continuously.
- Follow up and follow through.
- Educate yourself about pregnancy and abortion.
- Say "I don't know but I will find out."
- Provide a next step.

DON'T:

- Disengage because you are uncomfortable.
- Allow feelings to validate their choices.
- Remain distant or diagnose their problems.
- Share your own unrelated stories and issues.
- Assume adoption is their best option.
- Dismiss the power of God's Word.
- Allow lies your friend may believe to linger.
- Avoid further conversations.
- Let awkwardness keep you from being educated.
- Share empty spiritual clichés or make up answers.
- Assume they will figure it out on their own.

God's love, mercy, and design is bigger than any circumstance they are facing right now. The moment the egg and sperm combined in the woman's body, a new life, complete with all of its unique DNA, was created -- God was not caught off guard by this! Remind them that every life is valuable and thank them for trusting and sharing with you. Pray without ceasing, share passages like Matthew 11:28-30 or Isaiah 61:1-3, and provide a next step.

NEXT STEPS

Unexpected Pregnancy Mentoring (for women and men): pregnant@watermark.org; (972)454-9868
Watermark Urgent Care: watermarkurgentcare.com; (469)317-0028
Thrive Women's Clinic: thrivewomensclinic.com; (214)343-9264
Human Coalition Virtual Clinic: humancoalition.org; (888)884-8160
CHIP Perinatal: yourtexasbenefits.hhsc.texas.gov/programs/health/women/chip-perinatal
Abortion Education: abortionprocedures.com

