

“My Husband Wants to Put Our Daughter on Birth Control!”

Help! During a casual child raising discussion, I found out that my husband insists on putting our (unborn) daughter on birth control when she enters high school. He claims that it is the best thing “just in case” she gets caught up in temptation – he does not want her to “ruin” her life by having a baby so young nor does he want to raise the child for her. I tried to express my disagreement with the idea, indicating that I believe that placing her on birth control is a form of condoning the behavior and I do not want to give that impression to her. I even tried to use an analogy of telling her not to use drugs, but giving her a clean pipe to carry around “just in case” she is at a party one night and is tempted to smoke crack! Of course he saw the drugs as completely different, and he insists that birth control is the way to go. Your personal input backed by theological soundness is greatly appreciated.

I answer your question both as a mom and as someone who ministered to high school girls for several years.

First of all, you can relax. Making policy about unborn children is something lots of parents do and it completely changes when reality sets in.

Secondly, the cross-gender relationship between your husband and his little girl is going to be very different from what he expects. If he’s like most fathers he’s going to be extremely protective of her, and that means looking at the young men she hangs around with a very wary eye. Instead of putting her on birth control, there’s an even better chance he’ll have an eyeball-to-eyeball little “chat” with her male friends and let them know how he expects them to take extremely good care of her and that means not touching her sexually in ANY way. (With some dads, that “chat” happens without words by giving them the evil eye. . .<smile>)

Your drug analogy was really very good even if he blew you off about it. Here’s another one: what if he bought a Lambourghini that he kept in the garage, washed and waxed every week, was absolutely obsessive-compulsive about keeping it maintained to perfection. . . and then, when you daughter got her license at 16, said, “Here are the keys, honey, and of course, I got you insurance because you might get in a wreck but hey-no big deal. I expect you to wreck a car the first year of driving.” Uhh.....I’m thinkin’, NOT!!! <grin>

When parents get their teenagers birth control, they are making a statement about having low expectations of their kids. It’s amazing that we can expect that kids will exercise tremendous self-discipline for sports or academics, but when it comes to sexual activity we assume they are incapable of it! It’s entirely possible to start talking about the treasure of virginity and the importance of maintaining modesty as soon as kids are old enough to know what they are, and build a protective wall of positive expectations that help the kids maintain their purity. It has been a joy to see both our teenage sons accept a chastity ring and the challenge to stay virgins until they get married, and to fight the temptations of the flesh out of their own convictions. In other words, it CAN be done.

When my husband and I were growing up, we were told “Just say no” to sex, but not given any reasons why. When it was our turn to parent, we explained how God’s word tells us to keep the marriage bed pure and condemns fornication (sexual immorality), which is any kind of sexual activity

outside of marriage. As Josh McDowell communicates in his “Right From Wrong” conferences and book, God’s commands are given to both *protect* us from harm and *provide* us with good. We talked to our kids about sexually transmitted diseases (and showed them really gross photos of diseased sexual organs from the Medical Institute for Sexual Health [<http://www.medinstitute.org/>], where Ray got training for giving lectures on STDs). We also told them that sex in marriage is worth waiting for.

We understand that our kids will make their own decisions about these things, but we gave them all the ammunition to fight temptation (and a culture that is absolutely saturated in sex) that we could.

The great news is that parents today have more help [for example, Aim for Success at <http://www.aimforsuccess.org>] in assisting their kids to value purity and chastity than ever before, especially in the church. I hope that by the time your daughter is old enough to handle this issue, there will be even more!

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