



Center for Human Dignity  
at Family Research Council



## **A MAN'S GUIDE TO STANDING FOR LIFE**

by Mary Szoch and Joy Stockbauer



Center for Human Dignity  
at Family Research Council

**OUR MISSION:**

The Center for Human Dignity exists to defend the inherent dignity of the human person, from the moment of conception until the moment of natural death.

**WHAT WE BELIEVE:**

We believe that God, the Author of Life, has created every person in His image. Therefore, all people have inherent dignity and worth, and every human being has the right to life. The value of human life is not conditional upon its usefulness to others or the state, or an arbitrary evaluation of “quality of life.” Instead, it is unconditional, and is inextricably tied to us being God’s image-bearers.

A MAN’S GUIDE TO STANDING FOR LIFE  
BY MARY SZOCH AND JOY STOCKBAUER  
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# A MAN'S GUIDE TO STANDING FOR LIFE

by Mary Szoeh and Joy Stockbauer

Even though pro-life legislators are increasingly successful at enacting legislation that protect the unborn in the United States, the unfortunate truth is that abortions are still occurring every day. Every abortion touches multiple lives, whether all are aware of it or not—and this group includes men. Although men have exhaustively heard the mantra “No uterus, no opinion” from the abortion industry, many men have been deeply and personally affected by abortion. Some of the men in an unborn child’s life can include his or her father, grandfathers, uncles, or even men who are friends or attend church with the baby’s mother.

You do not have to be a woman to know that abortion ends the life of an innocent unborn child. Every man has a role to play in protecting unborn lives and supporting the mothers in their families and greater community. This guide will equip men with phrases to utilize or avoid, as well as practical tips for seeking further help in protecting life regardless of what the man’s relationship is with the expectant mother or unborn child. By stepping in to support a mother and speak up for her child’s life, every man has the opportunity to be an unborn baby’s hero.

## OVERALL TIPS FOR EVERYONE

### *1. Offer a quick prayer for guidance before approaching the mother.*

Your first step in talking to a woman experiencing an unexpected pregnancy should always be to ask God for His help. He is the Author of life and the Creator of both the new mother and her baby, and He has plans for both of their futures. Ask God to give you wisdom as you begin a conversation.

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*Life is always a gift from God, regardless of the circumstances*

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## *2. Congratulate the new mother!*

Life is always a gift from God, regardless of the circumstances, and God can use any situation for good. Celebrate new life, even if the context is not ideal.

## *3. Listen to her story.*

The majority of your conversation should be the mother talking and you listening.

## *4. Emphasize her good characteristics.*

Help this new mother see the best things about herself. Help her recognize her own strength and capabilities by reminding her of unique giftings and abilities. If she is a Christian, remind her of God's care and provision for her.

## *5. Use the words “mother” and “baby.”*

A woman who is pregnant is a mother. Using the word “mother” to refer to her describes the relationship between her and her child. The unborn child is a baby—her baby. Refer to him or her as such.



*6. Keep your voice calm and maintain eye contact.*

The mother will be looking to see how you respond both verbally and nonverbally. Try to stay as positive and affirming as possible.

*7. Ask her what she needs and offer practical help.*

If a woman has told you she is unexpectedly pregnant, she likely is in need of real help, not simply a vague offer. Assist her in whatever way you are able. Remember, prayer is practical help!

*8. Connect her to resources available to her.*

There are over 2,700 pregnancy resource centers (PRCs) across the country. Employees at these centers have the training and resources to help women who are considering abortion or find themselves in difficult circumstances. Connect the mother with the PRC in your area. Offer to join her on her first visit there.

*9. Do what you can to alleviate her fear.*

There is good chance that a woman facing an unexpected pregnancy is feeling afraid of the future. It is important that the people she turns to for help be a source of strength and encouragement.

*10. Be persistent.*

Although you should not manipulate or offer ultimatums, you should be persistent in your commitment to helping the mother and defending her unborn child. You cannot force her to not have an abortion, but you can pray without ceasing and check in on her consistently.

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*You should be persistent in your commitment to helping the mother and defending her unborn child.*

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## 15 TIPS FOR HELPING YOUR CHILD'S MOTHER CHOOSE LIFE

Under current federal abortion law in the United States, a father has no legal ability to prevent his child's mother from undergoing an abortion if she chooses to do so.<sup>1</sup> However, studies consistently show that mothers considering an abortion tend to factor their partner's wishes into their decision. Fathers of unexpected babies should not only verbalize their desire for the child to be born, they should also actively and lovingly persuade the mother to protect the life of their unborn child from the evils of abortion.

### THREE THINGS TO SAY

**1. *"You are not alone. We will care for our child together."***

The mother of your child might be feeling scared, vulnerable, and even ashamed. She needs to hear that you will be there for her as she carries your baby in her womb for nine months and that you will be present as the child's father throughout his or her life (unless the baby is to be put up for adoption).

**2. *"You're already a mom, and I'm already a dad—and that's awesome! I can't wait to meet our little one."***

Your child's mother might believe the lies of the abortion industry that unborn children are not living humans. While avoiding a condescending or forceful tone, take the time to lovingly discuss the evidence that the child in her womb is a unique, unrepeatable, and valuable human life—a tiny one who just needs time to develop before he or she can be born.

**3. *"This might not be the ideal circumstance, but God has a good plan for our baby and for us—and I will be with you the entire way."***

Facing unique challenges throughout this pregnancy does not make your child any less precious or valuable than a baby expected by married parents. Rather than allowing any guilt or shame related

to an unexpected pregnancy to fester, celebrate your child's life with the mother and acknowledge that your baby will be a blessing to the world. Reaffirm your commitment to being a father and do what you can to eliminate the mother's fear.

## THREE THINGS NOT TO SAY

### 1. *"This isn't my fault."*

This phrase is doubly harmful. In one sense, it puts your precious unborn baby in the role of being a problem to be solved rather than a blessing to be celebrated. In another sense, it assigns blame to the mother for actions that were not only her doing. You are equally responsible for your child's life, even though you are not the one physically nurturing him or her during pregnancy. It is time to move forward and accept that, no matter what could have been done differently in the past, you are now parents.



*2. “I will support whatever decision you make.”*

You might have been taught that it is unjust or immoral for you to have an opinion about what a woman does with her body. However, when it comes to abortion, a mother is not making a decision simply about her body but also about the life of the defenseless unborn child in her womb. If the mother chooses to have an abortion, believing that she has your support, you are complicit in your child’s loss of life.

*3. “I will take an active role in the baby’s life—as long as we get married.”*

Although you might feel that the logical next step after becoming pregnant is to get married, your child’s mother might not feel the same way. If you pressure her into marriage as a requirement of having your child, she might turn to abortion as an escape. You must accept that you are the child’s father even if you will never be married to the child’s mother.

## **THREE THINGS TO DO**

*1. Protect the mother and your child from the harsh words and scrutiny of others.*

Many women fear being pregnant outside of marriage because they could face judgment and shame from their friends, family, and community. Be physically present with her as she breaks the news of the baby to her parents and loved ones. It is important that you take responsibility to protect the mother of your child as much as possible from people in either of your lives who would treat her or your precious unborn baby with derision.

*2. Attend prenatal appointments with her.*

About 80 percent of pregnant mothers experience anxiety and worry related to their pregnancy and the process of childbirth.<sup>3</sup> Your presence and support during the frightening moments of pregnancy and childbirth are essential. If the mother is actively

considering an abortion, encourage her to have an ultrasound and accompany her to the appointment; seeing your child for the first time could be the evidence she needs to continue the pregnancy.<sup>4</sup>

**3. *Proactively make a plan for the child's future after being born.***

Explore all your options by researching adoption as well as parenting.

## **THREE THINGS NOT TO DO**

**1. *Do not expect her to drop out of school or quit her job or expect her to care for the child by herself.***

It is unfair to assume that your child's mother will abandon her education or career because she is pregnant; the lie that women are not capable of succeeding if they choose life for their children is a reason why many women have been coerced into having abortions. At the same time, putting unequal pressure on the mother to care and provide for the child might cause her to doubt if she should carry the baby to term. Commit to figuring out the future together.

**2. *Do not take your stress out on her.***<sup>5</sup>

While your concerns during this time are understandable, they are not justification for adding to the mother's anxiety. It is unfair to her and increases health risks for both mother and baby during pregnancy.<sup>6</sup> Talk to someone at your church or in your family about your stresses.

**3. *Do not believe the lie that you must support her choosing an abortion.***

According to a 2018 survey of male partners of mothers seeking abortions, over half of the fathers surveyed admitted that they wanted to keep their child but felt required to support their partner's decision to abort.<sup>7</sup> Fathers must make their stance clear while there's still time to save their child's life.

## THREE PLACES TO TURN FOR HELP

### 1. *Church leadership*

In times of fear or confusion, it is always wise to turn to church leadership for counsel and prayer. Be careful to ensure that your pastor or church leadership is aware that the conversation is intended to stay confidential and private.

### 2. *A local pregnancy resource center*

Pregnancy resource centers (PRCs) exist to support women (and their partners) needing assistance during their pregnancies. Over 2,700 PRCs throughout the nation seek to combat the stress and anxiety experienced as a result of an unexpected pregnancy by providing free services (such as counseling, pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, and STI testing) and material resources (such as food and clothing).<sup>8</sup>

To find a PRC near you, visit Pregnancy Decision Line at [pregnancydecisionline.org](http://pregnancydecisionline.org) or call 866-798-9541. Pregnancy Decision Line provides confidential, free support to anyone facing an unexpected pregnancy. You can also visit Option Line at [optionline.org](http://optionline.org) or call or text 800-712-4357. In addition to offering emergency hotline support and information about pregnancy and abortion recovery, Option Line connects you with a PRC near you for local support.

### 3. *Supportive family and friends*

While using discretion about maintaining the privacy that the mother desires, make a point of building a community of family and friends that you and your child's mother can turn to for wise counsel and compassionate emotional support.



## 15 TIPS FOR HELPING YOUR DAUGHTER CHOOSE LIFE

Studies consistently demonstrate the influence that a father's presence or absence can have on a daughter's life. Women who grew up with absent fathers are more likely to experience teenage pregnancy and choose to undergo abortions.<sup>9</sup> Be present in your daughter's life and assure her there is nothing she could do that would make you stop loving her. If your daughter is currently facing an unexpected pregnancy, you have a significant role to play in maintaining both her well-being and the life of your grandchild.

### THREE THINGS TO SAY

1. *"Your mother and I were overjoyed the day you were born, and now, I can't wait to meet my grandchild."*

Telling your parents that you are unexpectedly pregnant can be incredibly difficult. Regardless of the challenging circumstances surrounding her pregnancy, you must make sure your daughter knows the value of her baby's life and that her child is a welcome new addition to your family. You may be disappointed in the choices your daughter might have previously made, but the best thing you can do now is let your daughter know how loved she and her unborn baby are.

2. *"You are going to be an amazing mother."*

Your daughter needs the people who raised her and know her best to tell her that she is capable and strong enough to carry her baby to term and choose the best option for her baby's future. Remind your daughter that both parenting and placing for adoption are loving options.<sup>10</sup>

3. *"What fears or stressors can I help you manage?"*

Take time to calmly listen to your daughter's fears and allow her to communicate what she needs from you during this time. Make sure she knows that she is loved unconditionally and that you are there to help her.<sup>11</sup>

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*Make sure your daughter knows that she is loved unconditionally and that you are there to help her.*

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### **THREE THINGS NOT TO SAY**

**1. *“I’m disappointed in you.”***

Although you might be feeling a complex range of emotions, it is best to handle them with a counselor or pastor rather than directly with your daughter. Making your daughter feel guilty will damage your relationship with her and could also drive her to undergo an abortion.

**2. *“I told you this would happen.”***

Perhaps you feel that your daughter’s unexpected pregnancy could have been avoided had she listened to your judgment about a partner or situation. It is time to let go of the past and move forward, accepting that your role now as her parent is to guide her through her challenging circumstances rather than cast judgment on her past actions.

**3. *“We can take care of this before anyone has to know.”***

Encouraging your daughter to pursue an abortion is never a viable option. You are accountable to the Lord for your influence over your daughter in protecting her baby’s life; seek the approval of God, not of man (Galatians 1:10).



## THREE THINGS TO DO

### *1. Offer financial support to the degree that you are able.*

Depending on your daughter's age, she might be more or less financially dependent on your provision during and after her pregnancy. Even if your daughter no longer lives in your home, offering financial support can help alleviate her stress and demonstrate your love and care for both her and your grandchild.

### *2. Step in as a pseudo-father figure for your grandchild if the father is absent.*

The father of your grandchild might not be willing to positively participate in the baby's life. Research shows that engaged father figures can produce the same positive effects in children as present biological fathers.<sup>12</sup> Offering your own time, energy, and resources to help fill this gap can help your grandchild thrive.

### *3. Help your daughter navigate any tense relationships with relatives or family friends.*

Some members of your family might react negatively or with judgment to the news of your daughter's unexpected pregnancy. Make clear to your extended family that disrespect or judgment towards your daughter and grandchild will not be tolerated.

## THREE THINGS NOT TO DO

### *1. Do not make the situation about yourself.*

Although your daughter's unexpected pregnancy might have brought stress or discomfort into your life, it is impacting your daughter's life and future immensely more. Stay focused on guiding and supporting her rather than making her feel guilty for how you have been affected.

### *2. Do not offer help or approval only in exchange for your daughter doing things "your way."*

The unexpected nature of your daughter's pregnancy might cause you to doubt her responsibility or parenting skills. However, she is now a mother and is responsible for making the parenting decisions that she feels are best for her child. Support her unless you believe her decisions are causing authentic harm to herself or the child.

### *3. Do not intentionally strain the relationship between your daughter and the baby's father.*

Despite any hard feelings or tension that you might have toward the father of your grandchild, do your best to remain civil with him unless you believe that he is causing harm to your daughter or grandchild. If he desires to be present as a loving father, do not be the reason why he cannot do so.

## THREE PLACES TO TURN FOR HELP

### *1. Church leadership*

In times of fear or confusion, it is always wise to turn to church leadership for counsel and prayer. Be careful to ensure that your pastor or church leadership is aware that the conversation is intended to stay confidential and private.

## *2. A Christian counselor*

Situations that are particularly trying on mental or emotional health sometimes require professional assistance. It is best to seek a counselor who openly states that they are a Christian in order to ensure that you are receiving biblically sound advice. To find a Christian counselor in your area, consult Focus on the Family's Christian Counselors Network by calling 1-855-771-HELP.

## *3. Support groups for grandparents*

Find a support group in your area that specifically assists grandparents whose children have unexpectedly become parents. By building a community that is facing similar familial circumstances, you will have an outlet to share your own struggles without emotionally burdening your daughter.



## 15 TIPS FOR HELPING YOUR FAMILY MEMBER CHOOSE LIFE

Nearly half of all pregnancies in the United States were unplanned and unexpected.<sup>13</sup> It is highly likely that at some point in your life, a woman in your family will face an unexpected pregnancy; therefore, being prepared to offer support and unconditional love is essential to maintaining a culture of life within your family. Whether the mother is your sister, niece, cousin, or any other relation, your support could make an enormous difference in the lives of both the mother and her baby.

### THREE THINGS TO SAY

*1. Thank you for sharing this with me. We are family. I love you, and I am here for you.*

It might have been incredibly challenging for your relative to share the news of her unexpected pregnancy with you. Thank her for sharing about her situation and assure her that she is not alone.

*2. You are strong, and I believe in you and your ability to choose life and choose the best path forward for you and your baby.*

In this time of uncertainty, this mother needs to be reminded of her own strength. She needs to know her family members believe in her.

*3. When you think about a path forward for you and your baby, what help do you envision needing?*

It is a good idea to have this new mother think about the future with her baby. As she describes her needs for the future, offer areas where you can step in to help her.

## THREE THINGS NOT TO SAY

*1. Your mom/dad/grandma/grandpa is going to be so disappointed in you.*

This is not the time to overwhelm the new mother with thoughts of how everyone else will react to her news. Focus on her and her strength.

*2. If you don't tell mom and dad, I will!*

Instead, offer to accompany her when she tells her parents. This new mother needs support and strength, not ultimatums.

*3. You can't give the baby up for adoption. I can't have a relative out there who I don't know.*

Never stigmatize adoption. Birth mothers make a courageous and loving decision to make an adoption plan for their child. It is an incredibly difficult and loving choice to make, and it is not about you. No matter what you are feeling in this moment, your focus needs to be on the new mother, not on yourself.



## THREE THINGS TO DO

*1. Ask if she has told her parents. If not, offer to join her as she tells them.*

Fear is a major motivator in the decision to have an abortion. Do your best to alleviate the fears you can.

*2. Offer to help her talk through a pros and cons list of her future options.*

Use life-affirming language during this discussion. Choosing life for her child is the best option for her. If she is honest about the pros and cons, she will see this.

*3. Take her out for dinner.*

Every pregnant woman could use a night out to dinner, especially a woman who is unexpectedly pregnant. Make sure you treat and that she gets dessert if she wants it!

## THREE THINGS NOT TO DO

*1. Don't tell your entire family.*

This is her story, not yours. A new mother does not need to be the source of gossip.

*2. Don't tell her that you'll never speak to her again if she has an abortion.*

Although you might think this is a helpful way of advocating for the unborn baby, it merely creates another source of fear. Fear is a major factor in choosing to have an abortion.

*3. Don't offer to help her hide the situation.*

Treating her pregnancy as a circumstance to be hidden implies that her child's life is a source of shame rather than joy.

## THREE PLACES TO TURN FOR HELP

### *1. Local pregnancy resources centers*

Pregnancy resource centers (PRCs) exist to support women needing assistance during their pregnancies. Over 2,700 PRCs throughout the nation seek to combat the stress and anxiety experienced as a result of an unexpected pregnancy by providing free services (such as counseling, pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, and STI testing) and material resources (such as food and clothing).<sup>14</sup>

To find a PRC near you, visit Pregnancy Decision Line at [pregnancydecisionline.org](http://pregnancydecisionline.org) or call 866-798-9541. Pregnancy Decision Line provides confidential, free support to anyone facing an unexpected pregnancy. You can also visit Option Line at [optionline.org](http://optionline.org) or call or text 800-712-4357. In addition to offering emergency hotline support and information about pregnancy and abortion recovery, Option Line connects you with a PRC near you for local support.

### *2. Church leadership*

In times of fear or confusion, it is always wise to turn to church leadership for counsel and prayer. Be careful to ensure that your pastor or church leadership is aware that the conversation is intended to stay confidential and private.

### *3. A loving, mutually trusted relative*

Seek out a wise, potentially older relative that both you and the mother feel is trustworthy. Having a compassionate third party to turn to will allow you to express your own fears, concerns, or anxieties about the situation without emotionally burdening the mother or betraying her privacy.

## 15 TIPS FOR HELPING YOUR FRIEND CHOOSE LIFE

The most common reasons women cite as contributing to their decision to undergo an abortion are that they were financially or mentally unprepared to have a child.<sup>15</sup> It is important for women facing unexpected pregnancies to know that they are surrounded by a loving support system. One study showed that over 50 percent of women seeking an abortion had told a friend about their plans first.<sup>16</sup> Your role as a friend could make all the difference in her and her baby's lives.

### THREE THINGS TO SAY

#### 1. *"Congratulations!"*

You could be one of the first people that your friend has told about her pregnancy. You might also be the first person who chooses to respond positively. Make it clear to your friend that despite her challenging situation, you believe that her child is a blessing to be celebrated rather than a problem to be solved.<sup>17</sup>

#### 2. *"How can I help you?"*

Your friend might be facing many stressful and difficult situations due to her pregnancy. Her family might have cut her off; she could be fearful of medical complications; she might need spiritual encouragement. Pay attention to what she tells you are her deepest needs and then seek to help her however you are able.

#### 3. *"It's okay to be scared."*

Although your friend might be putting on a brave face for the world around her, she might be feeling vulnerable and fearful about her unexpected circumstances. Encourage her by reminding her that feeling unprepared does not mean that she is incapable of being a wonderful mother, whether that looks like raising her child herself or placing her child for adoption.

## THREE THINGS NOT TO SAY

### 1. *“I’m so sorry.”*

Avoid using any language that depicts the new life in her womb as a burden, a mistake, or a problem. Although you certainly can and should comfort your friend, maintaining positive language can help her view the situation more confidently and minimize feelings of shame.

### 2. *“How did this happen?”*

Do not cast judgment or blame on your friend for facing an unexpected pregnancy, even if you had previously warned her about a romantic partner or situation. She might endure judgment and harshness from others around her; she does not need to receive the same from a trusted friend.

### 3. *“Let me know if you need anything.”*

This vague offer of help means well but is not a reliable enough assurance that you will be there to help your friend.<sup>18</sup> Try offering more tangible ways that you are willing and able to help, such as providing a meal or a ride.





## THREE THINGS TO DO

### *1. Organize a supportive community around her.*

Ensuring that the mother's practical needs are being met is one of the best ways that you can help her during her pregnancy and beyond. Once the pregnancy is public knowledge, encourage your mutual friends to offer their support by organizing a baby shower or a rotation of checking in on her needs.<sup>19</sup>

### *2. Respect her privacy.*

Although your friend has shared with you that she is pregnant, do not assume that she is comfortable discussing the details of her pregnancy or expect that she is willing to share every detail of her situation with you. It is possible to show support and love even without knowing the full picture.

### *3. Use your specific skills or gifts to bless her.*

Contemplate the areas of need that you can most directly assist with or that other people might not be able to address. For example, if you are skilled in financial planning, you could bless your friend by offering to help her restructure her budget in preparation for her child.

## THREE THINGS NOT TO DO

### *1. Do not encourage her to consider abortion as a viable option.*

Do not fall prey to the lie that abortion only concerns a woman and her own body. When it comes to abortion, a mother is not making a decision simply about her body but also about the life of the defenseless unborn child in her womb. Do not be afraid to gently and lovingly advocate for the life inside her womb. Remember: friends don't drive friends to abortion clinics.<sup>20</sup>

### *2. Do not make your friend the subject of gossip—even in the form of prayer requests.*

Your friend has trusted you with personal information about her pregnancy; steward her trust well by keeping information to yourself and protecting her privacy from the curious ears of the world around you. Never reveal private details to others, even if they are friends, family, or members of your church community.

### *3. Do not pressure her to be there for you as a friend to the same degree that she has in the past.*

Although you may be devoting time, energy, and resources to helping your friend during her unexpected pregnancy, it is also important to recognize that she is not in the position to reciprocate your friendship to the same degree that she typically would. Set aside your expectations and allow her the freedom of mind to focus on being a mother.

## THREE PLACES TO TURN FOR HELP

### *1. Church leadership*

In times of fear or confusion, it is always wise to turn to church leadership for counsel and prayer. Be careful to ensure that your pastor or church leadership is aware that the conversation is intended to stay confidential and private.

## *2. A pregnancy resource center*

Pregnancy resource centers (PRCs) exist to support women needing assistance during their pregnancies. Over 2,700 PRCs throughout the nation seek to combat the stress and anxiety experienced as a result of an unexpected pregnancy by providing free services (such as counseling, pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, and STI testing) and material resources (such as food and clothing).<sup>21</sup>

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## *3. Supportive mutual friends*

While using discretion about maintaining the privacy that the mother desires, make a point of building a community of mutual friends that both you and the mother can turn to for wise counsel and compassionate emotional support.



## 15 TIPS FOR HELPING UNMARRIED MOTHERS IN YOUR CHURCH CHOOSE LIFE

According to a Care Net study, four in 10 women who have had an abortion attended church at the time of their pregnancy; however, only seven percent of women discussed their decision to abort with anyone from their church.<sup>22</sup> As a Christian, you have a significant role to play in saving babies' lives from abortion, and it starts with having a loving response to unexpected pregnancies within your church community.

### THREE THINGS TO SAY

#### 1. *"I'm not judging you."*

Sixty-five percent of women seeking an abortion said that they believed they would be judged if their church knew that they were unmarried and pregnant.<sup>23</sup> Decreasing the stigma of judgment within your church can help women feel more inclined to choose life because they know their community will support them.

#### 2. *"I care about your well-being and the baby's."*

The abortion industry has pushed the perception that people who are pro-life only care about the baby's life and disregard the mother's.<sup>24</sup> The church ought to combat this false notion by ensuring that mothers feel loved, valued, and cared for by their community both during and after their pregnancy.

#### 3. *"Children are always a blessing, never a punishment."*

Mothers facing unexpected pregnancies might feel shame and guilt about their circumstances and take a negative view of the child in their womb, which could lead to seeking an abortion to escape social pressure. Encourage mothers with the truth of Psalm 127:3: "Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward."

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*If the church is to advocate against the evils of abortion, then church members must take seriously the charge to care for vulnerable mothers and their children.*

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### THREE THINGS NOT TO SAY

1. *“If you didn’t want a baby, you shouldn’t have had premarital sex.”*

Unmarried mothers are already painfully aware of the circumstances that brought about their pregnancy. Being reminded that their public pregnancy automatically notifies their community that they have had premarital sex can motivate women to choose abortion if they fear shame from those around them.

2. *“God will forgive you if you have an abortion.”*

Although it is true that God will forgive any sin of which we repent and ask for forgiveness, God’s mercy should never be considered clearance to sin (see Romans 6 for more on this). If God’s mercy is not emphasized properly or alongside the Bible’s teaching on the personhood of the preborn child, the woman might think you are saying, “Having an abortion is fine because God will forgive you anyway.” Instead, talk about God’s great love for both the mother and her baby. Talk about God’s plan for both of them and your willingness to help her along the way.

3. *“I’ll be here for you no matter what.”*

Certainly, you should help the mother no matter what decision she chooses, but like emphasizing God’s forgiveness, this could make her believe you are condoning having an abortion. Instead, offer to call and check on her in a week. Knowing that you will be following up might help alleviate the mother’s fears that she will be alone. If you do offer to check in on her, make sure that you follow through.

## THREE THINGS TO DO

### *1. Offer to pray with her and for her.*

Mothers who are pregnant outside of marriage might feel distant from the Lord or their church community. Simply praying with and committing to praying for a vulnerable mother can help remind her of her identity in Christ and to be convicted to reject abortion.<sup>25</sup>

### *2. Provide financial or practical support (even anonymously).*

Matthew 6:3 says that when you give, “do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.” If a woman in your church is facing an unexpected pregnancy, offering an anonymous gift of support such as a grocery store gift card or a baby gift could be the practical encouragement she needs.

### *3. Organize a church ministry that advocates for life by helping mothers.*

If the church is to advocate against the evils of abortion, then church members must take seriously the charge to care for vulnerable mothers and their children. Consider beginning or volunteering with a church ministry that provides material and spiritual aid to mothers who would otherwise consider abortion.

## THREE THINGS NOT TO DO

### *1. Do not stigmatize placing a child for adoption.<sup>26</sup>*

For many unmarried women facing an unexpected pregnancy, especially young ones, the fear of being financially or circumstantially unable to provide for a baby is a major motivator to undergo an abortion. If they believe that they will receive condemnation for placing their baby for adoption, they might think that abortion is their only choice.

## *2. Do not forget about mothers after their babies are born.*

Women in the church will notice how their community continues (or fails to continue) to care for mothers after their children are born. Demonstrating continuing community support, especially for mothers who are unmarried or facing unexpected pregnancies, speaks volumes to the culture of life within the community.

## *3. Do not use her as a negative example.*

When discussing sexual morality in your church's teaching, emphasize that premarital sex is wrong because God intended for sex to take place within the context of marriage between a man and a woman and that the best environment for a child to be raised is within a loving marriage. A single mother in your church should never be used as an example of why not to have premarital sex. Instead, anytime a single mother in your church comes up, highlight the courage and heroism of the woman's decision to choose life.

## **THREE PLACES TO TURN FOR HELP**

### *1. Church leadership*

In times of fear or confusion, it is always wise to turn to church leadership for counsel and prayer. Be careful to ensure that your pastor or church leadership is aware that the conversation is intended to stay confidential and private.

### *2. Local pregnancy resources centers*

Pregnancy resource centers (PRCs) exist to support women needing assistance during their pregnancies. Over 2,700 PRCs throughout the nation seek to combat the stress and anxiety experienced as a result of an unexpected pregnancy by providing free services (such as counseling, pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, and STI testing) and material resources (such as food and clothing).<sup>27</sup>

To find a PRC near you, visit Pregnancy Decision Line at [pregnancydecisionline.org](http://pregnancydecisionline.org) or call 866-798-9541. Pregnancy Decision Line provides confidential, free support to anyone facing an unexpected pregnancy. You can also visit Option Line at

optionline.org or call or text 800-712-4357. In addition to offering emergency hotline support and information about pregnancy and abortion recovery, Option Line connects you with a PRC near you for local support.

### *3. A Christian counselor*

Situations that are particularly trying on mental or emotional health sometimes require professional assistance. It is best to seek a counselor who openly states that they are a Christian in order to ensure that you are receiving biblically sound advice. To find a Christian counselor in your area, consult Focus on the Family's Christian Counselors Network by calling 1-855-771-HELP.



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## Endnotes

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**M**en have exhaustively heard the abortion mantra “No uterus, no opinion.” However, this platitude ignores the fact that both women and men are deeply and personally affected by abortion. Furthermore, you do not have to be a woman to know that abortion ends the life of an innocent unborn child.

Every man has a role to play in protecting unborn lives and supporting the mothers in their families and greater community. This guide will equip men with phrases to utilize or avoid, as well as practical tips for seeking further help in protecting life, regardless of what the man’s relationship is with the expectant mother or unborn child. By stepping in to support a mother and speak up for her child’s life, every man has the opportunity to be an unborn baby’s hero.



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