**Q&A: Parenting a pregnant teen**

**Question:**How should we respond to our teenage daughter who has no desire to be a part of our family after becoming pregnant?

**Answer:**

Whether she wants to be a part of your family or not, your daughter desperately needs your love and support. Let her know that you care about her and her baby. Remind her of the value of the precious life she’s carrying within her womb. Tell her that you’re ready, willing, and available to walk with her through this frightening new experience and help her weigh and balance her options. She won’t be able to do this effectively without your assistance and that of other wise, caring and life-affirming adults.

For guidance in this area, we recommend Margie and Greg Lewis’ book *Hurting Parent: Help and Hope for Parents of Prodigals* (Zondervan, 2010). Additional resources and referrals to local pregnancy centers are available from the [Canadian Association of Pregnancy Support Services](http://www.capss.com/) (CAPSS).

**Support, don't control**

Bear in mind that *support, guidance*, and *availability* are not the same thing as *control*. In other words, there’s an important sense in which you *cannot* "parent" a pregnant teen. Your daughter has taken a step into a new and larger world. She has to learn to live with the consequences. You can encourage her to do what’s right and comfort her as she grapples with the harsh realities of her situation. But you can’t make her decisions for her.

It’s unlikely that she will be able to provide for herself and her child on her own. For the time being, she will have to remain dependent upon you (or somebody else) for her physical and financial sustenance. But she also has to realize that a new day is dawning in your relationship. The template is shifting from "parent-child" to "adult-adult."

**Seek professional help**

We’d strongly suggest that you seek professional counselling. Our staff counsellors would be happy to discuss your situation with you over the phone. They can help you in your efforts to set boundaries, establish expectations, and clarify the consequences of your daughter’s failure to abide by them.

Our counsellors are available to speak with you Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Pacific time at 1.800.661.9800. The counselling assistant who answers the phone will arrange for a licensed counsellor to call you back. In the meantime, never forget that the Lord is with you. He will not fail to lead and guide you as you place your trust in Him.

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*If you liked this article and would like to go deeper, we have some helpful resources below.*