

A CARE NET INITIATIVE

Caring for those considering
ABORTION

SESSION 2:

Understanding the Pregnant Woman's Perspective & Feelings, Part 1

TAKEN FROM

making **LIFE**
DISCIPLES[™]

*Equipping the Church to offer compassion, hope, help,
and discipleship to women and men considering abortion.*

SECTION 2.5: THE PREGNANT WOMAN: A MISSIONARY MINDSET

Before missionaries deploy to a foreign country, they will most likely spend time learning the native language and values of those they wish to serve. To effectively connect with people considering abortion, it is important to start with a “missionary mindset” in order to gain a basic understanding of that person’s world and worldview.

While many of the women you will serve as a Life Disciple will not actually be from a foreign country, their worldview and perspectives on life might seem foreign to you nonetheless! If you are, for example, much older than the woman you are serving, you will likely see the world a bit differently. People from the “Millennial generation” (those born between 1980 and 2000), including young Christian women, often have a different perspective on abortion, pregnancy, marriage, and life than those of the Baby-Boomer generation (those born between 1946 and 1964.)⁵

While there are underlying reasons and influences common to many women who choose abortion, you must not assume all women consider abortion for the same reasons. Therefore, taking the time to understand the world (her circumstances, thoughts, and feelings) of the woman you are serving is critical.

Understanding her world, and the factors that have led her to consider abortion, begins with you being curious and interested in her and her life. As you listen, you will learn things like:

- Her thoughts about abortion before she found out she was pregnant
- How she feels about the influential people in her life
- Commitments she values
- Etc.

Like a missionary who seeks to impact a culture, once you understand the world of the woman you want to serve, you will be better equipped to minister to her physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.

NOTES:

SECTION 2.6: THE PREGNANT WOMAN: A LIFE DISCIPLE'S PERSPECTIVE

Handouts:

Life Circumstances

'Dear Little Thing' *Cosmopolitan* Magazine's Open Letter

As discussed earlier, women choose abortion for a variety of reasons and amidst a variety of circumstances. It is tempting to say that a woman's circumstances or position in life make her more or less vulnerable to having an abortion. But the fact is, an abortion decision can occur in any circumstance and in any kind of family or demographic. It is important for a Life Disciple not to assume that only certain "types" of women will consider abortion. Instead, a Life Disciple should assume all women are the same: created in God's image with intrinsic value and worth.

Life Disciples need the following perspective about each woman they will serve:

She has potential. God loves us for who He created us to be. And He loves us so much that He will meet us exactly where we are. This is the perspective that each Life Disciple must always remember. God creates each woman facing a pregnancy decision in His image—with a plan, a purpose, and with unfailing love for her. She may have no sense of purpose or value. Or she may have decided that she determines her own value and destiny apart from any reference to God. Even if she was raised hearing about God's love, she may have responded to difficult circumstances by doubting that God could actually care about her. As you consistently treat her with dignity, compassion, and kindness, she may be open to hearing about God's view of her worth.

She has a desire to nurture life. Most people instinctively know that life is worth protecting and nurturing. However, if the woman facing a pregnancy decision does not know the facts about fetal development and when life begins she may not sense the need to protect or nurture. You may be the only person who challenges her to tap into these God-given desires, helping her to see her unborn child as worthy of protection.

In the first moments of wondering about the possibility of pregnancy, many women are filled with awe, wonder, and happiness. For a pregnant woman who doesn't want a child at this time, those feelings may not emerge, or they may be quickly overwhelmed by fear, anger, or other negative emotions. A Life Disciple can help her connect with positive feelings about pregnancy while instilling hope concerning the complications of her situation.

She has hopes and dreams. Many people have an idea of what they would like to achieve and receive in life. And most people do not set out to make their lives difficult. But unexpected and hard things happen in life, and they sometimes upset hopes and dreams. When a woman unexpectedly becomes pregnant, she may think her dreams are shattered or that a baby will ruin her plans for the future. She may re-evaluate her goals and decide which priorities are of the highest value. As a Life Disciple, you may be a voice of hope and encouragement in her challenging circumstances. You have an opportunity to be an advocate for her and for her child, helping her see the possibilities for achieving her dreams in new and unexpected ways. With the right support, the future can be better than she has dared to hope.

Because she may perceive conflicting goals—for example, motherhood versus continuing with school or having a professional career—she may benefit from encouragement to consider how it may be possible for her to pursue both goals. Brainstorming about her available resources and support, including resources she may not yet be aware of, is an opportunity for her to gain a new perspective, centered on hope.

She has her own beliefs and value system. She will not listen to or consider your perspective unless you have established trust with her. Trust leads to earning the right to share your ideas. Make sure you are careful not to impose your own preferences on her. Being an effective Life Disciple requires that you explore the cultural and personal values and beliefs she holds. Careful listening with clarifying questions will help you understand her world. Once you know how she sees the world, you must respect her, even if you disagree with her beliefs.

She is created in the image of God. This may be a new concept to her. She may come to church with only vague ideas or knowledge about God, Christ, and Scripture. Even though more young adults than ever say the Christian faith is irrelevant, an unplanned pregnancy can open a door for sharing the Gospel.⁶

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Designed by G. Nathan Smith, Martin Stanley and Audra Jon Hoover.

General Editor: Cynthia Hopkins, VP Center Services & Client Care, Care Net

Editor: Mary Chapman, Director of Church Outreach & Engagement, Care Net

ISBN: 978-0-9972285-0-2

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44180 Riverside Parkway, Suite 200

Lansdowne, VA 20176

(703) 554-8734 Office

(703) 554-8735 Fax

info@care-net.org

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