

**General Topics :: Do we have the freedom to decide how many children to bear?****Do we have the freedom to decide how many children to bear? - posted by neemia (), on: 2012/9/10 13:39**

As married couples, are we free to decide if we want a certain number of kids? Some Christian argue that it is a sin to limit the number of children one wants to bear.

Re: Do we have the freedom to decide how many children to bear? - posted by hachi, on: 2012/9/10 19:40

We have no freedom whatsoever on deciding how many children we have, as that number is totally up to God. When I say this, I mean that although someone may determine to have four children and reach that amount, there are many times when couples were not wanting another child and conceive. I think though that there is a balance between the two extremes of exclusively stopping at the number you decide and in the words of many Christians "leaving it up to God," in the sense that they have as many children as physically possible. We should leave up the amount of children we have up to God, in the sense that although we may desire a certain number, we understand that God is in control of circumstances and whatever He decides is okay. That could mean that God only allows a woman to conceive one child or maybe miscarry many only to have two, when the couple had originally wanted many more. On the extreme side, there is nowhere in Scripture mentioned that one should have as many children as physically possible. On the contrary Scripture would disapprove such beliefs in reference to having child after child when you cannot fully give the time and attention they need, when you cannot provide for them, when you are so drained by the amount of children you neglect God. There are many factors to consider. It is best to be in prayer about God's will for your life concerning children. Never have a set number in your head- be willing to accept God's number. Once again, I do not believe that is the concept of having as many children as physically possible. It is more about accepting God's will is better than your preconceived notions.

Re: - posted by DEADn (), on: 2012/9/10 20:52

neemia

Do not be bound by religious tradition such as what you are asking. To do so only leads to troubles down the road for you, then your marriage, then your kids as time goes by. Some people want to have kids as long as they remain fertile while others want no kids. Let it be your choice and let not that choice be dictated by those who say you should have a lot of kids such as those in the quiverfull movement.

Re: Do we have the freedom to decide how many children to bear? - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2012/9/10 21:34

QUOTE:

"Do we have the freedom to decide how many children to bear?"

Apparently so because scripture is silent on this issue.

Some folks use the OT as a guide to determine the number a person should have. If you check closely the largest number of children any woman had was six. One was Hannah and the other Keturah. However, this in no way teaches us how many a woman should birth - it just tells us how many a couple woman had.

Scripture does not inform us how many children a woman birthed before the flood. All we know is Noah whose wife apparently had three.

My understanding.

ginnyrose

Re: Do we have the freedom to decide how many children to bear? - posted by Zionshield (), on: 2012/9/11 23:46

Hi Neemia,

I believe you are trying to be sensitive to the Lord in discovering what He wants in this important matter. While listening to friends and asking others for input may be helpful I don't think you are going to get a satisfactory answer until you and your mate get direction from the Lord through His Spirit that abides in you.

My wife and I handed control of that to the Lord. We believe that is what He wants from us, however, I would not tell any one else what they should do.

I prayed for you.

Re: Do we have the freedom to decide how many children to bear? - posted by Koheleth, on: 2012/9/12 3:32

Amazing that a discussion like this can happen and no one will mention the very first commandment given to man in the Scriptures: "Be fruitful and multiply."

As far as sin, I don't think there are many issues to send people on a guilt trip on, but when this issue is discussed, notice how often people will tell you what they think or believe without a reference to Scripture. I suggest you begin by considering God's purpose for creating humans and consider the first commandment. God said it was "very good".

Re: "Be fruitful and multiply." - posted by savannah, on: 2012/9/12 8:22

One poster writes,

"...notice how often people will tell you what they think or believe without a reference to Scripture."

"When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister. She said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I shall die!" Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel, and he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" Genesis 30:1,2

Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. She conceived and bore a son and said, "God has taken away my reproach." And she called his name Joseph, saying, "May the LORD add to me another son!"

Genesis 30:22-24

But to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the LORD had closed her womb. And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her, because the LORD had closed her womb. 1 Samuel 1:5,6

And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat. Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons? So Hannah rose after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD. And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the LORD, and wept bitterly. And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thy handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thy handmaid, but wilt give to thy handmaid a male child, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli observed her mouth. Now Hannah spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. And Eli said to her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD.

Count not thy handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hither to. Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him. And she said, Let thy handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad. And they rose in the morning early, and worshiped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her. Wherefore it came to pass, when the time had arrived, after Hannah had conceived, that she bore a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD. 1 Samuel 1:7-20

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Therefore, I would have the young women to marry, to bear children, to rule the house, giving no occasion to the adversary on account of reproach. 1 Timothy 5:14

NOTE: "to bear children" in the above verse, literally translated would be, "to be a child bearer", that is, a parent, a mother.

May God bless all those child-bearers, or mothers, with a fruitful womb according to His purposeful will.

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2012/9/12 11:04

As I understand the original question it was about size of a family - the number of how many children a couple should have. Some posters have taken this a step further and that is commendable - there are more issues at stake than mere numbers.

After I posted I got to thinking about the shift in opinions concerning parenthood.

Others have detailed examples of holy women who took seriously the function of her purpose in life - that is to multiply and be a godly mother. It is this principle that has been discarded in recent years.

When I was a little girl, girls were encouraged to be moms. This instinct was promoted by playing with dolls, playing house with her being the mother. So by the time a girl reached 20 she was eager to get married and have her own family. Nature helped the girl along by maturing the body so she can reproduce. This is the way God made us. And he called it good! :-)

In recent years experts have downplayed the role of a female to birth and nurture and encouraged her instead to get out into the marketplace and hold down a paying job. This placed a terrible burden on the female. Can a woman have it both ways? Some say they can but others will dispute it. But what does the WORD say?

Proverbs 31 teaches us all about the wise woman. Titus 2 teaches us more about her function in the home and society. Combine both and what do you get? A person very capable, very talented who should be encouraged to do what she is capable of doing. There are extremes at both ends of the spectrum which one would do well to avoid. The focus still is to serve the LORD with your body by allowing it to be fruitful and multiply. In doing so there is no reason why a woman can not dabble in real estate or merchandising. But her first priority is to serve the Lord by serving her family - FIRST. This can also include her being very much involved with her husband in his work/business - after all, she is his help-meet. That should come before doing anything independently of her husband's work. Working together for the good of the family is what a woman's goal should be.

Not all females are called to marry and/or to motherhood. When this is the case one does well to not lament her state but be open to see where God would have her serve him. We cannot all do the same thing - we need diversity among us in order for society to function well which is why God gave people differing abilities. To ignore this reality is to shortchange someone somewhere - all to our own peril.

Having said all this, I do look with alarm when I see couples so infatuated with numbers that they are having babies as fast and many as nature will allow. This somehow repulses me. It is not natural at all. Makes one wonder at the motivation of this mindset.

Where am I in all this mix? I am a grandmother to eleven who birthed and raised to adulthood four sons and one daughter. And last week we celebrated 45 years of marriage! :-)

God bless.

ginnyrose

Re: Do we have the freedom to decide how many children to bear? - posted by mguldner (), on: 2012/9/12 11:10

In the world we live in and economy as bad as it is I would say its wisdom to limit how many kids you have. I have two beautiful babies and they expensive.

Re: Do we have the freedom to decide how many children to bear? - posted by savannah, on: 2012/9/12 11:33

To,

neemia the OP...

In accordance with the will and purpose of the life which has been given you by God, and His will and purpose revealed in His Word regarding this subject, I will answer your question, "As married couples, are we free to decide if we want a certain number of kids?", with the Word below, adding to what I wrote in my first post.

May God give you understanding.

"Then to one perceiving how to be doing the good and not doing it, to him it is sin." James 4:17

Re: - posted by hachi, on: 2012/9/12 21:51

I'm surprised nobody mentioned that verse automatically as well. Actually Koheleth, that Scripture is being used out of context, relating to the concept of having children. Context is king, as Kay Arthur says. If you notice where those words are strategically placed in the Bible it is when there is no populated earth- after the fall and after the flood. It is also important to take into the fact that those words were intended for those people- not for us. We need to be careful about how we use that Scripture. The reason why it is mostly opinion as you say, is due to the fact that there is no reference given in Scripture that says "Have this many children." It's only reference that children are a blessing. No numerical verses.

Re: Is God in control of the womb? - posted by Zionshield (), on: 2012/9/12 22:57

Thank you for sharing these scriptures. One thing that strikes about what the Word does reveal is that God is in control and can also determine when and if a child is given to us.

I have a son that just turned 5 last week, a 3 year old son, a 2 year old daughter and a two month old son. The only space of time I didn't have a child is the year we moved and settled into our home. I believe He gave us our children and the one year it would have been very difficult He prevented it from occurring.

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2012/9/13 9:53

Zion, I sure hope you are there to help your wife!

She is going to need a LOT of help to provide for your children. There is laundry to be done - and clothes to be folded and put neatly into drawers or hung up on hangers where they can be found. There is food to be cooked and dishes to be washed and put away after each and every meal. There are squabbles that need mediating, naughty children to be disciplined. Hurts that need kissing and bandaging. There are messes to clean up. On top of all this there is the emotional, spiritual needs that need tending to. There is a wife that gets weary emotionally, physically, spiritually - sometimes to the point to wondering why did she ever marry you and have your children! Lack of support will cause her to lash out at you and the children - and do not blame her for being spiritually weak! She needs you to help her carry this load. Having four children in five years is very stressful!

Are you providing her with all the emotional, physical help she needs in order to cope?

The work I listed may seem very stern, but hey! you must realize that keeping an orderly home is essential to raising orderly children as well.

Wishing you well...the hardest part is yet to come.

Re: Do we have the freedom to decide how many children to bear? - posted by Ceri (), on: 2012/9/13 15:16

I was stunned when we first married to be told by some in our then church to use 'Holy Spirit contraception' - not man made, and told that God will only give us the kids He wants us to have... well after a few honeymoon babies in church that year that idea soon died a death!!

Of course it's a decision we make as a couple - and not a sin at all!

We asked the Lord for two children, a boy to look after a younger sister.

When we felt ready and settled in life, 3 years later, we tried - sure enough God answered prayer and we had a boy followed 15 months later by a girl. Now 23 & 22 they truly are a gift from God to us, bless us and our church so much - and they look after each other! We really struggle together as a family financially and it would have been madness for us to have had more, even though my husband would have liked another.

We have to have common sense - we could not have afforded any more, nor had the home space for more, and as we are, we're a very close knit family unit.

My sister though has five, aged between 23 & 4 - four boys and a daughter (also expecting) in a two bedroom house! She struggles and complains, has constant health issues (stress related) and there is so much strife, noise and fighting in her house. Always a family crisis going on!

I don't believe God would have desired her to have a life like she has!

Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2012/9/13 16:35

I think GOD gives us wisdom and leads us in these decisions, but all of our choices in life should be made only after prayer not just this one. If HE is truly LORD of my life then I would think HE would have some things to say on the matter and as a couple coming together HE will give leading. I know that by the time we had our fifth child I was having some medical issues and so we chose not to have any more and I believe that was the LORDS will for our life.

On a side note I will add that young couples need to carefully consider the use of contraceptives and the health issues as well as spontaneous abortions that can be caused by these drugs. I would never have used them when I was younger knowing what I know now.

Just my thoughts

God bless
maryjane

Re: REWARD: Missing children - posted by savannah, on: 2012/9/13 16:53

One well-intentioned poster wrote the following -

"Zion, I sure hope you are there to help your wife!

She is going to need a LOT of help to provide for your children...Having four children in five years is very stressful!

Are you providing her with all the emotional, physical help she needs in order to cope?"

The poster who wrote this a grandmother, and I'm sure as I wrote above, that she was and is well intentioned as she wrote it.

Yet, as the husband and head of his wife and household, and his being a professing christian, why is it that when a man posts such as he did regarding his family decisions, a woman sees fit to give him a stern word of exhortation!

I tell you, it is because so many are not content with their own station or calling that they are under the impression that they must take a dog by the ears (Proverbs 26:17).

Another example of this comes from another woman poster as she writes,

"I don't believe God would have desired her to have a life like she has!"

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And in China, the Chinese Government would say similarly when they enforce a law stating one child per household.

I'd ask, is the poster in God's stead that she knows what He has decreed for each family. Or, has the Government in China become a god and a law unto themselves.

Sin encroaches upon us all, but we do not stop life or living because of it. No professing christian who says Jesus is LORD, would ever entertain the thought that their thinking is not far from the atheistic Chinese communist leaders, but how close some may be!

Another common denominator of these two posts from these women is that there are no Scriptures to back them up.

Let's get back to the Bible!

Start in the Book of Beginnings...the book of Genesis!

"Lo, children are a heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward." Psalm 127:3

Re: - posted by DEADn (), on: 2012/9/13 17:28

Quote:

Amazing that a discussion like this can happen and no one will mention the very first commandment given to man in the Scriptures: "Be fruitful and multiply."

This does not answer the original question. Only gives a reference and not everyone can have kids so it blows the whole theory out of the water.

Everyone has an opinion on this and I don't think there is a wrong answer unless of course a person becomes very unbalanced. Then there will be problems.

Re: Do we have the freedom to decide how many children to bear? - posted by romanhog (), on: 2012/9/13 19:51

I think as with ALL issues, we should not decide ANYTHING on our own. All of our decisions, if they are to be made correctly, must come from prayer and guidance of the Holy Spirit because only God knows what is His will for each of us.

It is wrong to establish a rule of what any couple should decide about how many children they should have or how to achieve that. That is legalism. We are no longer under the Law, but follow the Law of the Spirit (Rom 8:2). Following the Law of the Spirit requires that we pray and follow the direction of the Spirit, and not OUR wisdom based on worldly reasoning(which is foolishness). (1 Cor 3:19)

As for our family, we felt directed by the Spirit to not stop the blessings of the Lord (Psalm 127:3). We had 9 children, and we did not have any regrets, nor a house full of chaos. It has been a joy to raise and continue to raise these children.

However that does not mean that this is for anyone. It would be wise for every one to run their own race and look at the log in their own eyes and stop judging how God leads others. I am reminded of the saying, "Others might but you may not." We are all God's children individually, and He will guide us all individually.

Re: - posted by romanchog (), on: 2012/9/13 20:17

Savannah: Based on your response, I am sure you did not understand the spirit with which ginnyrose wrote her post.

As an older woman, she is exhorting a younger man (who could be her son) in love to take good care of his wife so that his home could be blessed. I don't think that she was ordering him to do anything.

Those of us who have taken care of several young children at once can attest to the need for a husband's support and helping hand. It is a stabilizing factor for our own spirit.

In Christ's service: romanchog

Re: - posted by Zionshield (), on: 2012/9/14 0:22

Ginnyrose,

I take into consideration that you have lived through this and the manner in which you have written and the content you have written have come out of that experience. Being that I am living through it with my wife I understand. I recognize men in general don't have a reputation for being helpful at home to the point that they really need to be.

I've tried to write some things in response, but I have a strong urge to defend myself and I must not respond to that feeling so I will say nothing more. I respect you for the hardship you endured.

Re: Side note - posted by savannah, on: 2012/9/14 1:19

One poster wrote,

"...young couples need to carefully consider the use of contraceptives and the health issues as well as spontaneous abortions that can be caused by these drugs. I would never have used them when I was younger knowing what I know now."

For any young couples, or any couples for that matter, the best researched read on this subject is a small book by Randy Alcorn.

It may be found at the following link, and may also be read online for anyone who is interested.

<http://www.epm.org/store/product/birth-control-pill-book/>

"The Pill is used by about fourteen million American women each year. Across the globe it is used by about sixty million. The question of whether it causes abortions has direct bearing on untold millions of Christians, many of them prolife, who use and recommend it. For those who believe God is the Creator of each person and the giver and taker of human life, this is a question with profound moral implications.

In 1991, while researching the original edition of ProLife Answers to ProChoice Arguments, I heard someone suggest that birth control pills can cause abortions. This was brand new to me; in all my years as a pastor and a prolife, I had never heard it before. I was immediately skeptical.

My vested interests were strong in that Nancy and I used the Pill in the early years of our marriage, as did many of our prolife friends. Why not? We believed it simply prevented conception. We never suspected it had any potential for abortion. No one told us this was even a possibility. I confess I never read the fine print of the Pill's package insert, nor am I sure I would have understood it even if I had." (Randy Alcorn, from his book)

"After coming to grips with the importance of this issue, and hearing conflicting opinions for the last few years, I determined to research this question thoroughly and communicate my findings, whether or not I liked what I found. I wanted, and still want, the answer to this question to be "No." I came to this issue as a skeptic. Though I heard people here and there make an occasional claim that the Pill caused abortions, I learned long ago not to trust everything said by sincere Christians, who are sometimes long on zeal but short on careful research." - Randy Alcorn

One thankful reader wrote this to the author,

"Thank you for your information on birth control. Being strongly prolife and a biology major, it has always been in the back of my mind that birth control pills caused abortions. Thank you for sending the message to others that are prolife. Right now you can pray for my husband and I as we are trying to conceive another child and are having difficulties and am searching for answers, hence I came upon your sight." M. B.

Reviews

"By carefully detailing the available medical information concerning the abortifacient effects of oral contraceptives, Randy Alcorn has developed a logical and thoughtful challenge to every prolife person. The conclusions of this study are scientifically accurate. Birth control pills usually prevent pregnancy, but sometimes they cause an abortion. Questions? Objections? Randy has addressed them in a gentle but firm way. This is the manner in which the often fiery debate over prolife subjects should be carried out- unemotionally, intelligently and quietly. The evidence is before us . . . 'How should we then live?' -- Patrick D. Walker, M.D., Professor of Pathology, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

"From medical textbooks and pharmacy references, to statements from the Pill-manufacturers themselves, this book proves, beyond any doubt, the abortion-causing action of birth control pills. This book should be read by everyone interested in knowing the truth." -- Paul L. Hayes, M.D., Board Certified Fellow of the American College of Obstetricians/Gynecologists

"I endorse Randy Alcorn's book with gusto. He has answered the title question with the care and compassion of a pastor, having searched out the facts with the diligence of an experienced researcher. He has provided all women in their reproductive years with an invaluable resource which will allow them to be fully informed about the birth control pill." -- William F. Colliton, Jr., M.D., Clinical Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, George Washington University Medical Center

"I must admit that I read this book with vested interests. My wife and I had been using the pill for a while so that I could finish graduate school before we had children (I am getting a Master's in theology as a Southern Baptist preacher). However, the strong empirical and logical arguments from this book changed my mind concerning the effects of all BCPs (birth control pills). I promise you that if you read this book and evaluate the research and examine the cogency of Alcorn's arguments with an objective mindset, you will be convinced of the abortifacient effects of BCPs. As a Christian and strong pro-life advocate, I cannot ignore the valid research which strongly suggests that BCPs are not only contraceptive in nature, but also abortifacient. I encourage to read this book very carefully." Joshua Wagner

An alternative to the PILL - posted by jochbaptist (), on: 2012/9/14 2:51

If I do the math correctly, there are at least 7 children mentioned here, in the house our Lord grew up in.
Matthew 13:55

Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? 56 And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?"

My wife and I have 4 daughters, of which we "planned" for 1, the others came by His sovereign will.

We also were not able to use the Pill without going against our consciences, and after searching a bit found that the best form of natural contraception for us was the Billings ovulation method. -

<http://www.thebillingsovulationmethod.org/en/>

Blessings

Joch

Re: An alternative to the PILL - posted by MaryJane, on: 2012/9/14 9:18

We also were not able to use the Pill without going against our consciences, and after searching a bit found that the best form of natural contraception for us was the Billings ovulation method. -

<http://www.thebillingsovulationmethod.org/en/>

Blessings

Joch

There are some other good methods out there that do not harm the mother or lead to a spontaneous abortion. When we go to GOD in prayer HE will lead us to know what is best for each one. I think as long as the husband and wife come together and seek GOD then they will know just the right number of children HE has for them.

I know of one couple who prayed in such a way and had no children of their own but so sure was the wife that they were to share their love with others they looked into adoption and now are a family of 4. GOD knows what is best :)

God Bless

mj