Q&A: Newly-Weds’ Use of Contraception

Written by Arnoud Vergunst

Question:

Is it right for a newly-wed couple to use contraception?

Answer:

God’s command for newly-wed couples is: “Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth …” Gen. 1:28. Therefore it would be disobedience for a newly-wed couple to use contraceptive means to prevent a pregnancy. If a couple realizes that they will not be ready to have a family, then they should realize that they aren’t ready to marry. The mindset of humanism is that ‘we please ourselves’ first while we shirk the responsibility that God gives us. Isn’t that often also the very mindset that makes newly-wed couples use contraceptive means to prevent children from being conceived? Years ago, I was listening to a ‘Christian’ couple explaining why they didn’t have any children. They first wanted to enjoy married life without the ‘clutter’ of children. Then there were big bills to pay on the house; they wanted to travel, etc. So they decided not to have children for a few years! They reasoned they were still young enough and so had plenty of years ahead. I was deeply shocked by this utterly humanistic reasoning. If I would paraphrase that sentiment, it would read something like this, “God … well, He needs to wait on us before we decide to obey Him!” Hmm, does that sound right? The tale of their life story isn’t uplifting. The couple experienced major troubles when they finally decided to have children. The first one was still-born; the second was a special needs child. I still wonder whether that was God’s answer!

So, let’s be clear about this. If you want the privilege of marriage, then you also need to submit to God’s call to be fruitful and multiply. Young couples should spend as much time together in that first year of their marriage to get to know each other better and to share this special time of their life before God blesses them with the responsibility of raising children. God allowed the young men in Israel one year reprieve of military duty after they were married so they could deepen the relationship by having much time for each other. So if you are not ready to accept the responsibility of children, then you really aren’t ready to get married yet.

“But we have been courting each other now for so many years already and we really can’t contain ourselves anymore. Didn’t Paul write that is better “to marry than to burn?” Yes, you
are correct about what Paul wrote. It is indeed not healthy and wise to have a long courting period in which you stir each other’s sexual desires without having the ability to satisfy them legally and purely as is done in marriage life.

The need to be married because we can’t contain ourselves any longer begins with starting the courting relationship far too early or with courting in an unbiblical way. It is not wise to start a courting relationship when you know you have several long years ahead of you yet. Additionally, you make it even harder when you transgress God’s directions about how to court each other. Spending time together in cuddles is something God reserved only for the marriage context! Let’s not quote Paul partially. He also wrote that ‘it is not good for a man to touch a woman.’ (1 Cor. 7:1) The Greek word ‘touch’ is linked to the idea of ‘kindling a fire.’ Physical touch kindles fierce fires in our bodies. There is nothing wrong with that ‘fire,’ for that is part of God’s beautiful creation. But there is something very wrong with the ‘kindling’ of this fire outside the marriage context. Therefore couples that are dating or courting should begin their relationship with obeying God’s commandments not to touch each other and to keep their nakedness concealed to each other. Those couples who have faithfully walked according to God’s rule in this area have experienced the blessings of obedience as they walked toward marriage! Many struggle with remaining pure and have fallen into the continued soiling of themselves in sexual activities God clearly has reserved for a married couple.

Warmly,

Pastor Vergunst