

When It Comes to the Abortion Issue, What Is an Empowered Woman?

For centuries, children were considered a divine blessing. God promised Abraham descendants “as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore” (Gen. 22:17, NIV).

But in 2021, \$8 billion was spent in America to prevent pregnancies. As the serpent deceived Eve, offering her the forbidden fruit as a method of becoming “like God,” the ideologies of birth control and pursuit of pharmaceutical means to thwart the divine command to be fruitful and multiply have wrought incalculable destruction.

Margaret Sanger, a nurse and eugenicist, founded the nation’s first birth control clinic in 1916. She lamented an “unceasingly spawning class of human beings who never should have been born at all,” seeking to “assist the race toward the elimination of the unfit” via birth control, framing it as a means to reduce poverty and empower women.

She introduced biologist Gregory Pincus; his research partner, physician and fellow Harvard professor John Rock; and Katharine Dexter McCormick, a wealthy feminist and birth control advocate who agreed to fund their testing of a “simple, cheap contraceptive.”

Trials began in 1954 on mentally ill patients at the Worcester State Hospital, who were given a birth control pill prototype and later underwent exploratory uterine surgery to confirm its effects. When their methods were questioned, Pincus and Rock relocated to Puerto Rico where, among 265 participants, 58 dropped out after side effects like blood clots and nausea, and three died. The women were never informed of potential risks, side effects, or even that they were participating in a

clinical trial.

The pill was approved by the FDA in 1960, and within five years, 6 million women took it regularly. While most pharmaceuticals ensure bodily processes occur normally, hormonal birth control completely alters or inhibits multiple functions of a woman's body with synthetic formulations of progesterone and estrogen, replacing those that naturally fluctuate throughout a woman's cycle and reducing the likelihood that an egg will be fertilized at all, or if it is, that it will successfully implant on the uterine wall to develop further.

Hormones control heart rate, sleep cycles, sexual function, metabolism, appetite, growth and development, mood, stress and body temperature. Synthetic hormones in birth control do not stay in reproductive organs, which has serious and far-reaching implications for women who take them. The American Cancer Society lists estrogen-progestogen contraceptives as a known human carcinogen, and they significantly increase risk of blood clots, heart attacks, strokes and pulmonary embolisms; breast and cervical cancer; liver tumors; diminished bone density; weight gain, depression and migraines.

Two large studies found a statistically significant increase in the risk of violent death for hormonal contraceptive users, one-third of which were suicides. Hormonal contraception leads to between 300-400 deaths every year.

This calls into question the actual efficacy of hormonal birth control. A study found that 51% of women who had abortions in 2014 had used hormonal contraceptives the month prior to becoming pregnant. For all hormonal birth control methods (pills, patches, rings and injections) the typical failure rate is between 6% and 9%, and while providing no protection against STDs, numerous studies show that synthetic hormones in some contraceptives can actually double the risk of acquiring

an STD.

The pervasive use of birth control has helped normalize casual sex, marriage rates have declined, the number of children raised in single-parent homes has increased exponentially, and 60 million abortions have occurred in the U.S. since its legalization in 1973—more than a decade after the pill became widely available. Birth control has decimated committed partnership, and the pharmacologically empowered woman is left with the consequences of its many side effects and failures.

The Catholic Church, often derided for its stance against artificial birth control, requires engaged couples to complete a course on Natural Family Planning, which boasts a success rate of 99% and teaches in depth about male and female bodies. *Taking Charge of Your Fertility* by Toni Weschler is a comprehensive guidebook that explains the intricacies of female anatomy and fertility such that pregnancy can be achieved or avoided without artificial interventions, and a woman can come to understand and work with (not against) her own body.

The quest to develop and disseminate hormonal birth control has misled, abused and dehumanized women from its inception. Far from empowering them with actual knowledge, the process has obfuscated and withheld the very truths that would genuinely enable them to make informed choices about their bodies, their health and their very lives. They have been treated as guinea pigs, as objects, as consumers, but rarely as competent individuals capable of making decisions that are good for them.

What is an empowered woman? Is it one who is medicated without informed consent? Or is it one who is reminded that her Creator designed her innermost parts in a fearful and wonderful way so that she can uniquely participate with Him in the very miracle of creating a new, immortal soul inside her own body?

It is an important question that demands an answer.

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