

Speaking frankly about sexual activity

Q: *When my college-age daughter was home over Christmas break, birth control pills fell out of her purse as I moved it. I am so disappointed, but I didn't say anything then because I was too upset. Since she's no longer living at home, do I have the right to confront her?*

A: If you or your husband are still primary caretakers of your daughter (for example, you're paying college tuition) then yes, you have every right to approach your daughter. More importantly, regardless of her age, as a Christian parent you have a spiritual responsibility to talk to your daughter about God's best for her life. Here are some helpful thoughts for you to contemplate before you confront your daughter.

Confronting is the Caring Response

When you approach your daughter, take a moment to explain to her how you stumbled upon her birth control pills. Could it be God was opening a door for the two of you to talk? There is no need to be defensive or apologize. You have done nothing wrong. Next, give your daughter the opportunity to fill you in on what is going on. James has some excellent advice for moments like these. He tells us to let our ears lead and our tongues follow (James 1:19, *The Message*). Make a concentrated effort to listen attentively without letting your emotions erupt. If your daughter is sexually active, you will need to tread carefully so she will feel your love and not just hear your confronting words.

God Knows What Is Best for Us

Approximately 50–60 percent of young single adults are sexually active. To most of us this is a staggering statistic, but it also refutes the lie that "Everybody's doing it." Your daughter can still be one of the 40-50 percent who choose abstinence and wait until marriage.

You have probably taught your daughter what God says about sexual intimacy outside of marriage. Remind her this is not a standard you and your husband created; rather, sexual purity is God's idea. If she chooses to end the sexual relationship she is involved in and wants to continue following God's way, remind her that God forgives our shortcomings and is ready to give us a fresh start (Isaiah 1:18).

God's rules prove that he loves us. God wants to save us from the suffering that results if we ignore the boundaries he lays out in the Bible. While birth control pills may prevent an unwanted pregnancy, they do nothing to prevent sexually transmitted diseases (STD). Anything but abstinence will increase your daughter's chances of acquiring a disease that has long-term consequences. The false sense of security that's offered as "safe sex" actually puts young people at risk. Three million teens get an STD each year; countless married women are unable to become pregnant because they contracted a sexually transmitted disease during their promiscuous younger

years.

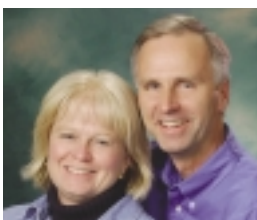
Sexual intimacy outside of a committed marriage relationship can also have devastating emotional results. Your daughter should be advised that sexually active males tend to have more than one partner—20 percent have six to 10 partners. Interestingly enough, the same young men who want sex without marriage want to marry a virgin. (Obviously, the girls they're having sex with aren't the ones they intend to marry.)

Stay Connected

Stay connected with your daughter. Loving a sinner while rejecting the sin is easier said than done. It is a difficult assignment, to say the least. While you are going through this tough time with your daughter, hold on to your belief in God's plan for her. You can be a source

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of strength as someone who can hold her accountable for her actions. Realize, however, that your daughter may not listen to you. If your daughter refuses to discuss the situation or refuses to change her behavior, don't give up on her when she needs you the most. Try not to draw battle lines with a "do this or else" attitude. Trust and pray that your daughter will soon see through Satan's lies and start living her life according to God's perfect plan. Commit to being there for her, especially when it hurts. When she comes to her senses, she'll remember you never gave up on her. ■



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