



Contraception and Abortion: The Ultimate Let-Down for Women

Over the past several decades, contraception and abortion have had far-reaching effects in our culture, shaping attitudes on sexual behavior on a massive scale. Contrary to the promises of freedom, empowerment, or equality, contraception and abortion have led to a greater degradation of women, especially in their relationships with men.

In 1968, in his encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, Blessed Pope Paul VI warned that "...a man who grows accustomed to the use of contraceptive methods may forget the reverence due to a woman, and, disregarding her physical and emotional equilibrium, reduce her to being a mere instrument for the satisfaction of his own desires, no longer considering her as his partner whom he should surround with care and affection" (HV 17).

As recent history has shown, the widespread availability of contraception and abortion has allowed men to push previously respected boundaries with women with greater insensitivity and impunity. Not only has this impacted marital (extra-marital affairs, divorce, etc.) and dating relationships, but, even more sadly, this has enabled male sexual abusers and sex traffickers to hide their crimes, increasing the suffering of their female victims.

The widespread promotion of contraception and abortion, in enabling a hyper-sexualized culture, has unfairly put all women at risk, whether or not they participate in the contraceptive mentality. The lack of respect and sexual victimization of women by men has become increasingly clear with the rise of the #MeToo movement and the increase in rape culture on college campuses, as well as the prevalence of empty relationships that lack depth or permanence. Women are rightly expressing pain and outrage over increased objectification, disrespect, and unsatisfying relationships with men.

A culture that promotes contraception and abortion falsely teaches women that their freedom comes through unrestrained sexual behavior. We can't help but see the irony of a culture that claims to condemn sexual violence against women, yet continuously glamorizes it in the entertainment industry.

Despite cries for female empowerment, women are expected to suppress their natural biological functioning and place themselves into a medicated

state by using pills, chemicals, patches, and devices, as if healthy fertility were a disease, in order to be sexually available to men. Abortion is the last resort offered when contraception fails and a woman feels abandoned and unsupported in her pregnancy. Sadly, she must often face the potential psychological and bodily trauma in isolation that may result from the procedure. The destruction of an innocent human life and repression of the woman's own life-giving capacity doubly harms the woman in very deep ways.

What would society look like if a woman were valued and respected for precisely who she is—without pills and patches to alter her body? What if her sexuality were seen as something precious and potentially life-giving, rather than as a cheap opportunity for another's pleasure?

Contraception and abortion promised more freedom and empowerment for women, but both have eroded respect for women and negatively impacted their relationships with men. If sex is not linked to authentic married love and its life-giving dimensions, it degenerates and becomes distorted, losing its original meaning and significance. A woman should never have to compromise herself, her body, her fertility, or her child through contraception and abortion to feel loved or respected.

Amidst the devastation wrought by the sexual revolution, women have an incredible opportunity to reshape the cultural conversation and positively impact their relationships. Women can give a powerful witness by rejecting the lies of contraception, preserving their sacred gift of sexuality for marriage, and offering compassion, care and support for other women experiencing unplanned pregnancies, so that isolation and abortion never have to be the final answer.

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