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Introduction

Can we, as believers in Christ, control how many children we have? Is family planning or contraception a sin? What does the Bible say about this? Many Christian families struggle with this controversial subject and do not know how to proceed. On the one hand, some God-fearing couples do not use contraception at all and give birth to many children, most of the time to the detriment of their health and far beyond their ability to care for and raise those children. On the other hand, other families use contraception, but may live with the tacit condemnation that they have broken God’s command. What, though, is the biblical truth about contraception?

In this article, we aim to find a biblical answer to this dilemma that would bring the life and freedom of Christ.

Birth Control Before vs. After Conception

First, I would like to make it clear from the beginning that any kind of contraceptive method used after conceiving a child is a sin, because it is abortion and murder. But, as we will see in this article and based on the Bible, family planning before conceiving a child is not a sin.

Does a Good Thing Require its Maximization?

Psalm 127:3 (NKJV)

³ Behold, children are a *heritage* from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a *reward*.

The Bible says in this psalm very often quoted by Christians that sons and daughters are an inheritance from the Lord and a reward. And they are so. Children are a gift and a blessing from God. But just because they are a gift from the Lord, does this mean that we should have as many children as possible? It is important to enjoy this truth because children are a gift from the Lord. But some people go further and say that since children are gifts from God, it is wrong to decide when and how many children we want to have.

Scripture also says in Proverbs 18:22 that a wife is a good thing and a favor from the Lord:

Proverbs 18:22 (NKJV)

²² He who finds a wife finds a *good thing*, and obtains *favor* from the Lord.

Just because having a wife is a good thing and a favor from God, does that mean that a Christian should have as many wives as possible? No, of course not. The Bible is very clear about this. Does it mean that it is wrong to remain unmarried if you choose this? Of course not. In fact, the apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7:7-8 that he would like all people to be unmarried like him. And he even advises those who are in that situation to remain so, in the context in which he also knew well Proverbs 18:22, that a wife is a favor from God:

1 Corinthians 7:7-8 (NKJV)

⁷ For I wish that all men *were even as I myself*. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that.

⁸ But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: it is good for them *if they remain even as I am*;

Just because something is a gift from the Lord and a good thing, does not require maximizing it. It does not mean that it is wrong to decide whether you want to take possession of that good thing, when and in what quantity. It is wrong to argue that since A is good and a gift from the Lord, then we must have as much of A as possible. God made this world in such a way that some negotiations and analysis must be done and we cannot do all things to the greatest extent. As theologian Wayne Grudem said, it is okay to put less emphasis on some good activities to focus on other good or even better activities. God said in Genesis 1:28:

Genesis 1:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "*Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth* and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

A farmer knows how much land he should cultivate. A farmer seeks to cultivate as much land as he thinks he would have the ability to cope with. He does not regard this commandment to be fruitful and to fill the earth as meaning that he must make his farm as large as possible from a natural point of view. In the same way, it is not a bad thing for a couple to have the number of children they believe they can reasonably take care of in the light of the other calls and destinies they have over their own lives. In the same vein, Wayne Grudem points out: "We are not required to maximize the number of children we have, in the same way, that we are not required to subdue the earth all

the time – that is, to always plant, grow and harvest. ”.

Child Birth Is a Kingdom Decision



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d how many to have, is a kingdom decision, that is, the kingdom of God must be considered first in making these choices. The apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7:7 that he would like all men to be single, although God had already said in Genesis 2:18 that it is not good for man to be alone and that he should multiply (Genesis 1:28). Paul makes a difference between the order of creation and the order of salvation (or redemption). According to the order of creation, God gave Adam a woman in a perfect world in which, before the fall, bearing children was a desirable and necessary thing from a natural point of view. However, after the fall, death entered the world and spread to all people and all now needed salvation. Yes, there is another passage in Genesis 9:7 after the flood (that is, after the fall) in which God tells Noah to multiply and spread throughout the earth, but this was understandable in their case. They were responsible for repopulating the earth. But the earth now has a population of over 7 billion people. Repopulation is not an issue anymore.

Children are a blessing from the Lord and arrows in someone's quiver (Psalm 127:4-5) and according to the order of creation or the natural order, it is good to have as many children as possible. However, according to the ordinance of the gospel and the kingdom of God after the fall, it may be wiser to have 2, 3, or 4 children instead of 10 or 20. In this way, both spouses will be able to fulfill their individual calling in the kingdom without canceling themselves once children have arrived. At the same time, they will have the resources and time to raise and

educate those children in such a way that they become people of the kingdom, who change the world and lift the burdens of others and do not become a burden to others.

The Motto: “Let Things Follow Their Natural Course”

Some people argue that we should “trust in God” and let Him determine the size of our family. And, if we truly trust God, then we should not use contraception or family planning. The assumption that these people start from seems to be that if we “just let things follow their natural course,” then God is working better than when we seek to control things and plan for them to happen. But of course this hypothesis is wrong! God has some influence in controlling the conception of children as much when we use family planning as when we do not. *The hands of the Almighty are not tied by our family planning!* A couple will have children if God wills it, whether or not they use contraception. As evidence, there are many cases of women who have used contraception for years and still become pregnant. So, whether or not we use contraception, in the end, God can have an influence on one’s family size.

This type of thinking “trust the Lord and do not use contraception” is based on the false assumption that what happens “naturally” reflects what God has best for our lives, and what happens through human means is second hand. Why do we conclude that the way to let God decide the size of our family is to step aside and let nature take its course? We certainly don’t think that way in other areas of our lives. For example, we never say that we should not cut our hair so that “God can decide” the length of our hair. Farmers don’t just allow the wind to plant their crops out of fear that the active management of what they grow on their land somehow interferes with the provision God wants to give them. Families don’t just trust God that he will give them food and then wait for it to fall from the sky, but they go to the store to buy it and prepare it. God created certain natural laws according to which the world works, but He gave people the authority to decide how to use these laws for their own good:

Psalm 115:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord’s; but *the earth He has given to the children of men.*

What happens without our planning is not necessarily better, nor does it reflect God’s desires for us more than when we plan.

God ultimately determines everything that will happen, both in nature and in human decisions, and He brings His will by certain means. Therefore, human activity does not interfere with His plans, but rather He governs as a means of accomplishing His will. Therefore, we should not conclude that what happens outside of our planning is “better” and reflects God’s desires for us more than what happens through our planning. God often makes us plan as a means to improve our lives and promote the purposes of His kingdom.

Family Planning Doesn’t Mean Lack of Faith

Without planning the number of their family members, many couples end up having more children than they can reasonably afford. In response, some argue that we should simply have faith that God will provide the funds and care. However, we do not use the same “God

will take care” reasoning to justify exceeding our possibilities in other areas of life. For example, we would not consider it wise to commit to donating twice our annual income to mission organizations, believing that God will provide the additional funds. God expects us to make wise decisions based on what He has given us and not to assume that He will take care of us so suddenly. Relevant financial considerations are an important factor:

1 Timothy 5:8 (NKJV)

⁸ But if *anyone does not provide for his own*, and especially for those of his household, *he has denied the faith* and is worse than an unbeliever.

Natural Family Planning vs. Artificial Contraception

Some conclude that “natural family planning” is acceptable, but “artificial” means (condoms, coitus interruptus, birth control pills, diaphragm, etc.) are not. But this standpoint seems to overlook something significant: in both cases, you are still looking to control when to have children. So, if we conclude it is wrong to control the calendar and size of a family, then the natural planning of the family is as wrong as the “artificial” means. But if we conclude it is acceptable to decide the time and size of the family, then what makes the “artificial” methods of family planning wrong, and the natural ones right? Certainly not the fact that God is “more free” to disrupt our plans through natural family planning!

Perhaps some have concluded that artificial forms are wrong because they allow a complete separation of sexual intercourse from the possibility of procreation. But if it is wrong to have sex without a significant possibility of procreation, then it would also be wrong to have sex during pregnancy or after a woman has passed the fertile years. There is no reason to conclude that natural family planning is adequate and that “artificial” means are not.

The Woman Will Be Saved Through Childbearing

1 Timothy 2:11-15 (NKJV)

¹¹ Let a woman learn in silence with all submission.

¹² And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.

¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve.

¹⁴ And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

¹⁵ Nevertheless *she will be saved in childbearing* if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.

Based on verse 15 of 1 Timothy 2, many Christian women do not use any family planning and do not stop having children so that they don't endanger their eternal salvation from hell. Because of a lack of knowledge and incorrect understanding of the Scriptures, these sisters often go to the grave long before their time or live a life of continual fear, condemnation, and frustration. So, let's see what the apostle Paul really wants to say in this passage.

The Greek word used in this passage for "saved" is *sozo*, which means "to save, to keep safe, to save from danger or destruction." This salvation must have the following characteristics. First, salvation must be *spiritual or physical*. Second, this salvation must be *from sin, death, danger, or deception*. And third, this salvation must *have some means*. Based on these criteria, four perspectives for interpreting the passage from 1 Timothy 2:15 have been formulated.

Salvation is spiritual, from sin, through childbearing

According to this view, women are spiritually saved from sin and receive eternal life through the birth of children. This perspective is ruled out from the outset for the following reasons. First, throughout the New Testament, eternal salvation from sin is for everyone and only through faith in Christ Jesus:

Romans 3:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ Therefore we conclude that a man is justified *by faith* apart from the deeds of the law.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NKJV)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved *through faith*, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

⁹ *not of works*, lest anyone should boast.

Romans 10:9-10 (NKJV)

⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and *believe in your heart* that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

¹⁰ For with the heart one *believes* unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Second, in Christ there is no longer a distinction between man and woman, as Galatians 3:28 shows us:

Galatians 3:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, *there is neither male nor female*; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

As for salvation from sin, men and women are equal, that is, they are saved by the same means: faith. Third, the context of verse 15 of 1

Timothy 2 has nothing to do with salvation. The previous verses speak of the roles of men and women. If we were to consider this interpretation and follow the same line of thinking, then men are also saved by teaching and exercising authority.

Fourth, not all women get married or have the option to ever have children. Then there are married women who still can't have children. What do we do with these people? Are they lost for eternity because they cannot give birth to children? Of course not. The salvation of women from sin cannot be a matter of reproduction.

Salvation is spiritual, from sin, through the birth of Jesus Christ by Mary

This perspective takes us back in time to the birth of Jesus Christ. According to this interpretation, Paul would like to say that when Mary gave birth to the Messiah, the violation that Eve had introduced into the Garden of Eden began to be repaired and revoked. Salvation entered the world in the person of Jesus. This view is based on God's promise to Eve in Genesis 3:15 that her seed would crush Satan's head:

Genesis 3:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between *your seed and her Seed*; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."

What are the problems with this interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:15? First, neither verse 15 nor the entire context mentions the name of Mary or Jesus. If Paul had wanted to make such a statement, he would probably have been much more specific and chosen other words. Then, the implied presence of the pronoun "they" (i.e., "if they will persevere in the faith") at the end of verse 15 of 1 Timothy 2 indicates that the passage refers to all women of all times and not just Mary. Even though Paul uses the singular "woman" for most of the passage, it is clear that he is referring to the woman in general and not to a particular woman.

Third, I must emphasize again that the theme of the whole passage is not salvation from sin, but the roles of men and women. The birth of children in women is contrasted with the teaching and exercise of authority in men.

Salvation is physical, from birth pains, through faith

According to this view, born-again women have the option of being spared the normal pain of childbirth that all women experience during the birth process (partially or even totally) if they have enough faith. This interpretation is based on the hypothesis that a woman born again and in Christ is no longer under the incidence of the initial punishment in the Garden of Eden.

Here are some acceptable arguments to support this perspective. First, before talking about salvation by birth, Paul alludes to Eve in the Garden of Eden, when she was deceived and fell into sin. The impact of this action on women was that God greatly increased their pain at birth and they now had to give birth to children in pain (Genesis 3:16). Through salvation in Christ, the woman may have less or no pain

while giving birth. Second, before modern medicine, the birth of children was such a difficult endeavor, almost like a death sentence. Anyone who has given birth to children or has a wife who has given birth will agree with this reality. Thus, Paul would argue here that by their faith and holiness, women will be protected one way or another from this traumatic event, possibly fatal.

Third, Mark 9:23 tells us that all things are possible to him who believes. If a Christian woman has enough faith, she may not experience any pain and be spared of death at birth. Fourth, Mark 11:24, John 14:13, and John 15:7 show us that if we ask anything in Jesus' name, we will receive it.

So far, so good. But what would be the problem with this point of view? The problem is that the Greek term Paul uses throughout the New Testament when he wants to refer to physical protection from danger is *rhyomai* and not *sozo*. (see Romans 15:31; 2 Corinthians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 2 Timothy 3:11):

Romans 15:31 (NKJV)

³¹ that *I may be delivered* from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,

2 Corinthians 1:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ who *delivered us* from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us,

Salvation is spiritual, from deception, through childbearing

This perspective seems to best explain this difficult passage and most faithfully reflect Paul's intention. The two key topics discussed in this passage are AUTHORITY over other people and TEACHING them (both men and women), especially in the church. From Paul's point of view, these two are reserved only for men and not for women.

Regarding authority, Paul states that women should not exercise authority over men and should be submissive to men. His argument is that Adam was created first and then Eve, and there is a hierarchy established by God in terms of authority both in the family and in society and in the church. This is also supported by other New Testament texts, such as Ephesians 5:23 and 1 Corinthians 11:3:

Ephesians 5:22-23 (NKJV)

²² Wives, *submit* to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

²³ For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.

1 Corinthians 11:3 (NKJV)

³ But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, *the head of woman is man*, and the head of Christ is God.

Regarding the teaching, Paul says that Adam was not deceived, but Eve was deceived and fell into sin. If we look back at the Garden of

Eden, although Adam was not directly deceived by the serpent, he was deceived by Eve. So, Eve was deceived by the serpent, and she in turn deceived the man further. She was both the deceived and the deceiver. A teacher should not be likely to be easily deceived by others when he is strongly established in his teaching. What Paul is trying to say here is that between a man and a woman, the woman is much more easily misled by others than the man and then she herself deceives other people. And he gives as an example what happened in the Garden of Eden. Because of this, Paul then says that a woman can be protected from deception by avoiding teaching others and rather by teaching herself quietly and adhering to her God-given roles, the main one of which is to bear children. Another passage that supports the weakness of women is 2 Timothy 3:6-7, where it is said that there were some people who always learned and never came to know the truth. These people used to captivate weak women in their teaching:

2 Timothy 3:6-7 (NKJV)

⁶ For of this sort are those who creep into households and *make captives of gullible women* loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts,

⁷ always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Another passage in support of God's roles for women who aim to save women from any reproach from the enemy is 1 Timothy 5:13-14. The roles for women described by Paul are to get married, have children and keep the house:

1 Timothy 5:13-14 (NKJV)

¹³ And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not.

¹⁴ Therefore I desire that the younger widows *marry, bear children, manage the house*, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

Although this seems to be the most viable interpretation of the intent of Paul's message, Paul's statement that women will be protected from deception if they engage in childbirth remains predominantly cultural and largely applicable to women of that time and that Jewish culture. Jewish society was patriarchal, a society of men. The situation is the same today for the most part in the peoples of the Middle East. The main reason why women at that time were more susceptible to deception was that women did not have access to secular education or training in the Law like men. But in the 21st century this problem no longer arises.

In conclusion, 1 Timothy 2:15 cannot be used to argue that family planning is unbiblical or against God's will.

Does Onan Sin Condemn Birth Control?

The scripture that comes closest to condemning family planning is Genesis chapter 38, with the story of the sons of Judah, Er, and Onan. Er married a woman named Tamar, but he was evil and the Lord killed him, leaving Tamar without a husband or children. Tamar was given in

marriage to Er's brother, Onan, according to the law of marriage by levirate in Deuteronomy 25:5-6:

Deuteronomy 25:5-6 (NKJV)

⁵ "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family; her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her.

⁶ And it shall be that the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.

Onan did not want to share his inheritance with any other child he could have on behalf of his brother, so he practiced the oldest form of contraception, that is, the interruption of sexual intercourse. Genesis 38:10 says, "What he did was evil in the eyes of the Lord, so the Lord killed him." Onan's motivation was selfish; he used Tamar for his own pleasure, but he refused to fulfill his legal duty to create an heir for his deceased brother, as we see clearly stated in verse 9:

Genesis 38:8-9 (NKJV)

⁸ And Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and marry her, and raise up an heir to your brother."

⁹ But *Onan knew that the heir would not be his*; and it came to pass, when he went in to his brother's wife, that he emitted on the ground, *lest he should give an heir to his brother*.

This passage is often used as proof that God does not approve of birth control. However, it was not the act of contraception that caused the Lord to kill Onan, but Onan's selfish motives behind his action. Therefore, we cannot find any biblical warning against the use of contraception itself.

Contraception, by definition, is just the opposite of conception. *The use of contraception itself is not wrong or good*. As we have seen in Onan's case, it is the motivation behind contraception that determines whether it is right or wrong. Married couples use contraception for a variety of reasons. Some feel called to postpone birth until they are in a better position to care for children. Others, such as missionary couples, may feel that their service to God transcends the desire to have children at some point. And some may even be convinced that God has a different plan for them. Finally, a couple's reasons for postponing birth, using contraception, or even having many children are between them and God. It cannot be argued in any way on the basis of the Bible that it is wrong to use contraception for a limited period of time, or even permanently.

God Is Not Against Sexual Pleasure

You are nearing the end of this article, and some of you may have the following thoughts: "All the logical and biblical arguments I have read about the fact that family planning is not a sin seem to make sense. But I still feel like I don't have complete freedom to use family planning

and I still feel like my conscience condemns me and I don't know why."

I would like to describe two reasons why you may not feel free in this area yet. The first reason would be the image you have of God about sexual pleasure. You may unconsciously believe that God is against sexual pleasure separate from procreation. But this is not the case at all. God is not against pleasures in general, as the devil wants us to believe, but against pleasures without boundaries or perverted pleasures. The devil has never created any pleasure. He is not able to create anything good or pleasurable, but only to pervert what God has already created and add death to it. In fact, God is the One who created us with smell, taste, sight and hearing only for our pleasure. He created this world with so many colors and options, with so much variety of animals and plants, with so many thousands of tastes and food options, just for us to enjoy them. If it was just about efficiency, God could have created a world only in black and white, let us eat without any taste, and so on. It is also God who invented and designed the intimate relationship between a man and a woman, not the devil. It was His idea. He is the One who gave this to men for pleasure and not just for procreation. If it was only for procreation, sexual intercourse was devoid of any pleasure. What I want you to see is that God is a God of life, pragmatic, loving, rich, and not against the things we like or desire. But He offers all these good things within certain boundaries, so that we don't harm ourselves or other people, and those good things are only a blessing and not followed by suffering and death.

The second reason you may still feel condemned in this area is your more sensitive conscience, which has been influenced without you realizing it to set some moral limits that the Bible does not set. Your conscience may have been influenced to think that family planning is a sin by the environment and culture in which you grew up, the people (parents, friends, teachers, pastors) and the institutions (church, school) that shaped your view of the world and God. I'll explain what I mean. Your conscience is not a perfect guide and you cannot depend on it alone. The conscience can be influenced; it can be marked with red iron or scarred (1 Timothy 4:2); it can be defiled; it may be distorted; it can be weak (1 Corinthians 8:7) or strong; and it can be good or bad. Let's look at some examples:

1 Corinthians 8:4-9 (NKJV)

⁴ Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one.

⁵ For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords),

⁶ yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.

⁷ However, *there is not in everyone that knowledge*; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; *and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.*

⁸ But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.

⁹ But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak.

From what we see in this passage, a weak conscience seems to be one that has less knowledge and revelation of the reality of God's Word, and as a result, more rules are imposed to it than necessary. This passage shows us that a conscience can be defiled by violating one of its rules. *A conscience is not defiled only with evil and immoral things, but also with things that go beyond our self-imposed limits and rules,*

which are based on our level of knowledge and revelation.

The passage above describes an existing problem in the church of the first century. Many people had been idol worshipers before becoming Christians and had a problem with meat purchased from markets that had been offered to idols. Some of these people who had taken part in idol worship felt condemned: "Well, for me to eat this meat that was worshiped to idols is like I would also take part in idol worship." But other people had a deeper understanding of God's grace and thought differently, "That idol is nothing to me, the meat is not defiled, and nothing will happen if I buy and eat meat that has been sacrificed and offered to idols before." This meat was probably even cheaper, so it was more convenient. Romans 14:20-23 describes a similar situation:

Romans 14:20-23 (NKJV)

²⁰ Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, *but it is evil* for the man who eats with offense.

²¹ It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother *stumbles* or *is offended* or *is made weak*.

²² Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.

²³ But he who doubts *is condemned if he eats*, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.

What we learn from this illustration is that human consciousness can make someone feel guilty about things there is nothing wrong with. I was once on a vacation with my family at the beach and while I was there, I went to a local church on a Sunday morning. The pastor there began to preach that Christians should not drink coffee or go to the beach. We were all tanned and enjoying life. Of course, everyone's eyes were on us, while this was being preached, not to mention the fact that everyone in the church there lived near the beach! Imagine this: living near the beach and never using it! What I'm trying to say is that your consciousness can change depending on your past, your education and various other things. Of course, each person is born with a basic consciousness and an intuitive knowledge of good and evil. But that basic consciousness can be both expanded to become very sensitive by adding more rules, and reduced to an opaque and insensitive consciousness that no longer works properly.

To better understand how consciousness works, we can compare it to a monitoring application. In my IT job field, we have monitoring applications that monitor databases and the usage of resources on the company's computers. For example, the use of storage space, the use of processors, the occurrence of various errors or corruption, etc. are monitored. Whenever an unusual event occurs or a pre-defined limit is exceeded, the monitoring application automatically sends a notification alert via email to my phone and then I can intervene and check what the problem is. These monitoring systems usually come bundled with a pre-defined set of alerts, which are most important and basic. After that, you can delete some of these pre-defined basic alerts, change their thresholds as in when to send notifications, or add more alerts and thresholds. Any monitoring system must have alerts adjusted and tuned in such a way that the system is not too susceptible to any error, but not too relaxed. On the one hand, if your monitoring system is too sensitive, you'll receive email alerts all the time that will flood your inbox, and you may miss some critical alerts. On the other hand, if the monitoring system is too loose, then you will receive fewer or no alerts. In this case, you have a much better chance of not being alerted when a real critical issue arises. Human consciousness works in exactly the same way. It comes bundled with a pre-defined set of basic moral guidelines. On the one hand, we can make this consciousness more sensitive by imposing new rules on our minds, consciously or unconsciously. Depending on the culture or type of church we grew up in, some new man-made rules may have been passed on to us without us being aware of it. These rules are

probably not necessarily bad in themselves, but *the disadvantage of a hypersensitive conscience is more condemnation and guilt*. On the other hand, we can make that consciousness insensitive by constantly violating it. The disadvantage of this state is that we slowly lose the ability to see as bad some things, facts or behaviors that are really bad or immoral. The remedy for a hypersensitive conscience in a certain area such as the one discussed in this chapter — family planning — is the repeated exposure of the mind to God's Word on that subject and frequent meditation on it until the conscience is completely washed away by the water of the Word.