

Question: "What does the Bible say about birth control? Should Christians use birth control?"

Answer from GotQuestions.org: Man was commissioned by God “to be fruitful and multiply” ([Genesis 1:28](#)). Marriage was instituted by God as a stable environment in which to produce and raise children. Sadly, children today are sometimes considered a nuisance and a burden. They stand in the way of people’s career paths and financial goals, and they “crimp our style” socially. Often, this type of selfishness is at the root of contraceptive use.

Contrary to the self-centeredness behind some birth control usage, the Bible presents children as a gift from God ([Genesis 4:1](#); [Genesis 33:5](#)). Children are a heritage from the Lord ([Psalm 127:3-5](#)). Children are a blessing from God ([Luke 1:42](#)). Children are a crown to the aged ([Proverbs 17:6](#)). God blesses barren women with children ([Psalm 113:9](#); [Genesis 21:1-3](#); [25:21-22](#); [30:1-2](#); [1 Samuel 1:6-8](#); [Luke 1:7, 24-25](#)). God forms children in the womb ([Psalm 139:13-16](#)). God knows children before their birth ([Jeremiah 1:5](#); [Galatians 1:15](#)).

The closest that Scripture comes to specifically condemning birth control is Genesis chapter 38, the account of Judah's sons Er and Onan. Er married a woman named Tamar, but he was wicked and the Lord put him to death, leaving Tamar with no husband or children. Tamar was given in marriage to Er's brother, Onan, in accordance with the law of levirate marriage in [Deuteronomy 25:5-6](#). Onan did not want to split his inheritance with any child that he might produce on his brother's behalf, so he practiced the oldest form of birth control, withdrawal. [Genesis 38:10](#) says, “What he did was wicked in the LORD's sight; so He put him to death also.” Onan's motivation was selfish: he used Tamar for his own pleasure, but refused to perform his legal duty of creating an heir for his deceased brother. This passage is often used as evidence that God does not approve of birth control. However, it was not explicitly the act of contraception that caused the Lord to put Onan to death; it was Onan’s selfish motives behind the action.

It is important to view children as God sees them, not as the world tells us we should. Having said that, the Bible does not forbid contraception. Contraception, by definition, is merely the opposite of conception. It is not the act of contraception itself that determines whether it is wrong or right. As we learned from Onan, it is the motivation behind the contraception that determines if it is right or wrong. If a married couple is practicing contraception in order to have more for themselves, then it is wrong. If a couple is practicing contraception in order to temporarily delay children until they are more mature and more financially and spiritually prepared, then it is perhaps acceptable to use contraception for a time. Again, it all comes back to motivation.

The Bible always presents having children as a good thing. The Bible “expects” that a husband and wife will have children. The inability to have children is always presented in Scripture as a bad thing. There is no one in the Bible who expressed a desire not to have any children. At the same time, it cannot be argued from the Bible that it is explicitly wrong to use birth control for a limited time. All married couples should seek the Lord’s

will in regards to when they should try to have children and how many children they seek to have.

Recommended Resource: Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues & Options, Second Edition by Norm Geisler.