



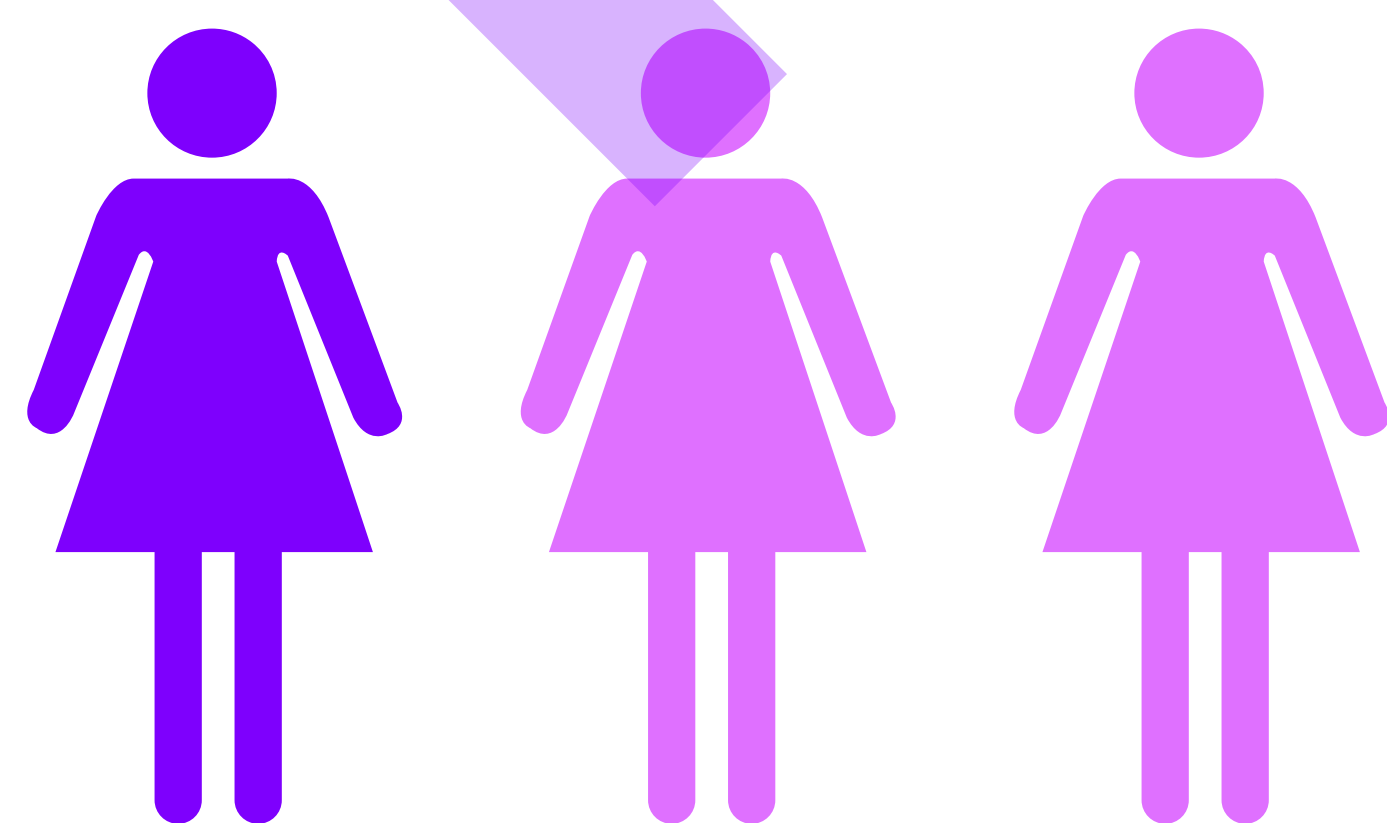
# BIRTH CONTROL

What's out there, and is it for me?

Culture pushes birth control at us like it's a no-brainer—the obvious, intelligent choice. Even Christian churches don't seem to teach much against it: A 2012 Gallup poll found that **82%** of Catholics believed birth control was morally acceptable, along with **90%** of non-Catholic Christians. Ten years later, birth control had become even more acceptable. A 2022 Gallup poll records that **92%** of Americans said birth control was morally acceptable.

It's unsurprising then that **65.3% of women** ages 15-49 use some form of birth control.

And, from a worldly perspective, it makes sense that use increases with age. Yet, the fact that **over 1 in 3 girls (38.7%)** aged 15-19 already use birth control is eye-opening.



Before we adopt the popular attitude toward birth control, we need to understand two things:

1

**Children are a gift** God desires to give married couples, so preventing that gift shouldn't be taken lightly. It's a decision best approached with prayer and contemplation on God's Word.

2

**Not all birth control is the same.** Birth control can be placed in two main categories: **contraceptives** and **abortifacients**.

### Contraceptives

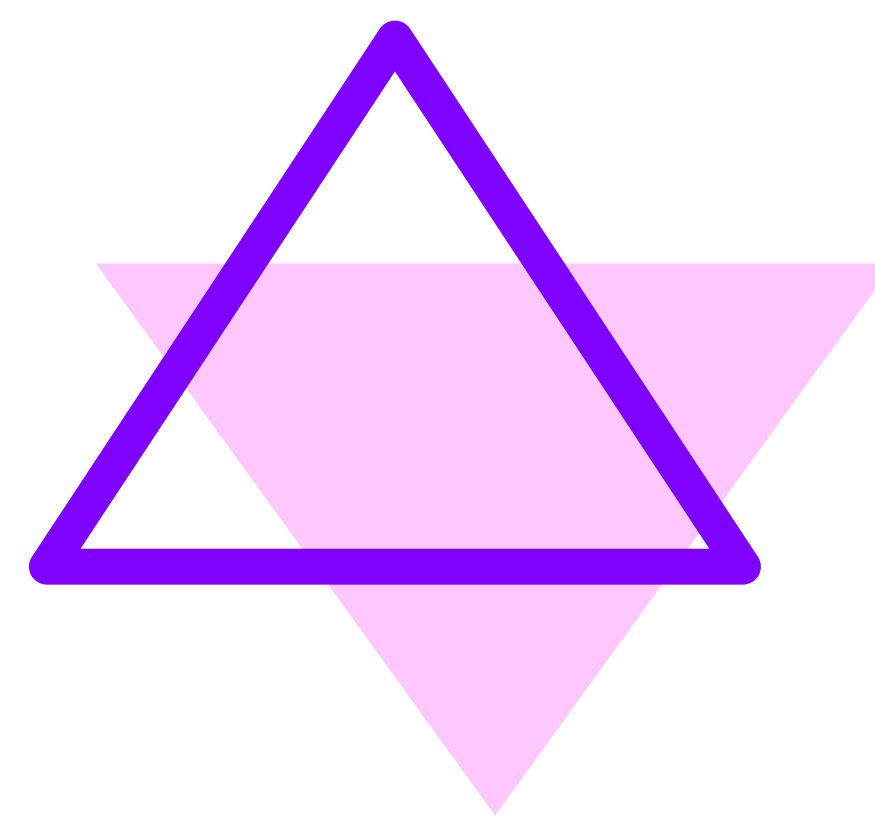
Birth control that is truly **contraceptive** works by preventing the sperm and egg from coming together in the first place so that **no new life is conceived**.

### Abortifacients

Birth control that is **abortifacient** actually **ends a newly conceived life** by preventing it from implanting in the uterus. As Christians who treasure the value of each human life, **we reject any method of birth control which ends a life.**



# True Contraceptives



**Abstinence:** the only acceptable form of birth control outside of a marriage. Sex is a gift given within marriage. Yet within marriage, couples might also choose to abstain during the days of a woman's cycle when she is fertile to prevent pregnancy.

**Barrier methods (such as condoms, cervical caps, and diaphragms):** keep sperm from reaching the egg through a physical barrier.

**Spermicide:** kills sperm as they enter the woman by its high acidity.

**Natural Family Planning (also referred to as fertility awareness-based methods):** a blanket term for many variations of tracking changes in temperature, cervical fluid, and other symptoms throughout a woman's cycle to determine her fertile window. Usually, abstinence or another contraceptive method is employed for the duration of her fertile window to prevent pregnancy.

**Lactational Amenorrhea Method:** breastfeeding regularly without introducing other food to the baby to prevent the return of the menstrual cycle.

**Permanent methods (sterilization):** tubal ligation severs and ties off the fallopian tubes so that the ovulated egg cannot be reached by sperm. A vasectomy severs and ties off the vas deferens so that sperm cannot enter semen. Because this act alters the body permanently and causes harm to working organs, this too should be contemplated prayerfully.

# Probable Abortifacients

There are two categories of abortifacients -- **devices** and **drugs**. Both prevent new life from implantation.

## Devices

**Intrauterine Devices (IUDs)**: create a hostile environment for embryos that reach the uterus. There are two types of IUDs: **hormonal IUDs**, which release the synthetic hormone progestin, and **copper IUDs**.

**Hormonal IUDs** use a synthetic hormone, progestin. This hormone will occasionally prevent ovulation. However, **its primary action is to interfere with the development of the uterine lining, or endometrium, and cause it to remain thin.** A thin endometrium not only effectively prevents implantation, but in rare cases when implantation does occur, the endometrium cannot sustain new life. **By design, this type of IUD is abortifacient.**

The second type of IUD is a **copper IUD**. It does not prevent the release of the egg at all. **Its primary function is to inflame the uterine lining, making it inhospitable to new life.** Copper also has a toxic effect on sperm, eggs, and embryos. Because copper IUDs attack an embryo, take away the nutrients needed for life, and prevent implantation, this, too, is abortifacient.



# Drugs

Birth control drugs can be taken **orally** or through **injectables and implants**.

**Birth control pills:** taken orally, these pills contain synthetic hormones that affect a woman's menstrual cycle. There are two basic types of daily oral birth control -- **combination pill** and **progestin only**.

**Emergency contraception:** another type of oral birth control. Emergency contraception is not taken daily. Instead, it is designed to be taken after unprotected sex.

**Injectables:** containing the synthetic hormone progestin, this birth control is administered every three months by a doctor.

Combination hormonal birth control ("the pill"), progesterone-only pills, emergency contraception ("the morning after pill" or "Plan B"), and long-term hormonal implants and injections all list multiple means of stopping pregnancy:

- preventing ovulation (true contraceptive)
- thickening cervical mucus to make it hostile to sperm (true contraceptive)
- **thinning the wall of the uterine lining to prevent implantation (abortifacient)**

One problem that further muddies the waters around birth control is how little research is done on the effects of some methods of birth control. Because we lack research, **it is impossible to know how often this third means of preventing pregnancy actually takes place.**

However, **we do know it happens.** Women do get pregnant while taking the pill, so sometimes, all three means fail. This means that sometimes, the first two fail, but the third - which actually terminates the embryo - works, **making this method of birth control potentially abortifacient.**

Like birth control pills, injectables like Depo Provera and contraceptive implants like Nexplanon can also prevent the implantation of a new human life by altering the lining of the uterus. Therefore, **injectables and implants are also potentially abortifacient.**

Abortifacients not only have the potential of ending the life of the baby, but **they can harm women as well.** Possible side effects of abortifacient methods such as birth control include **hypertension, anemia, paralysis, stroke, blood clots, heart attack, and an increased risk of cervical and breast cancer!**

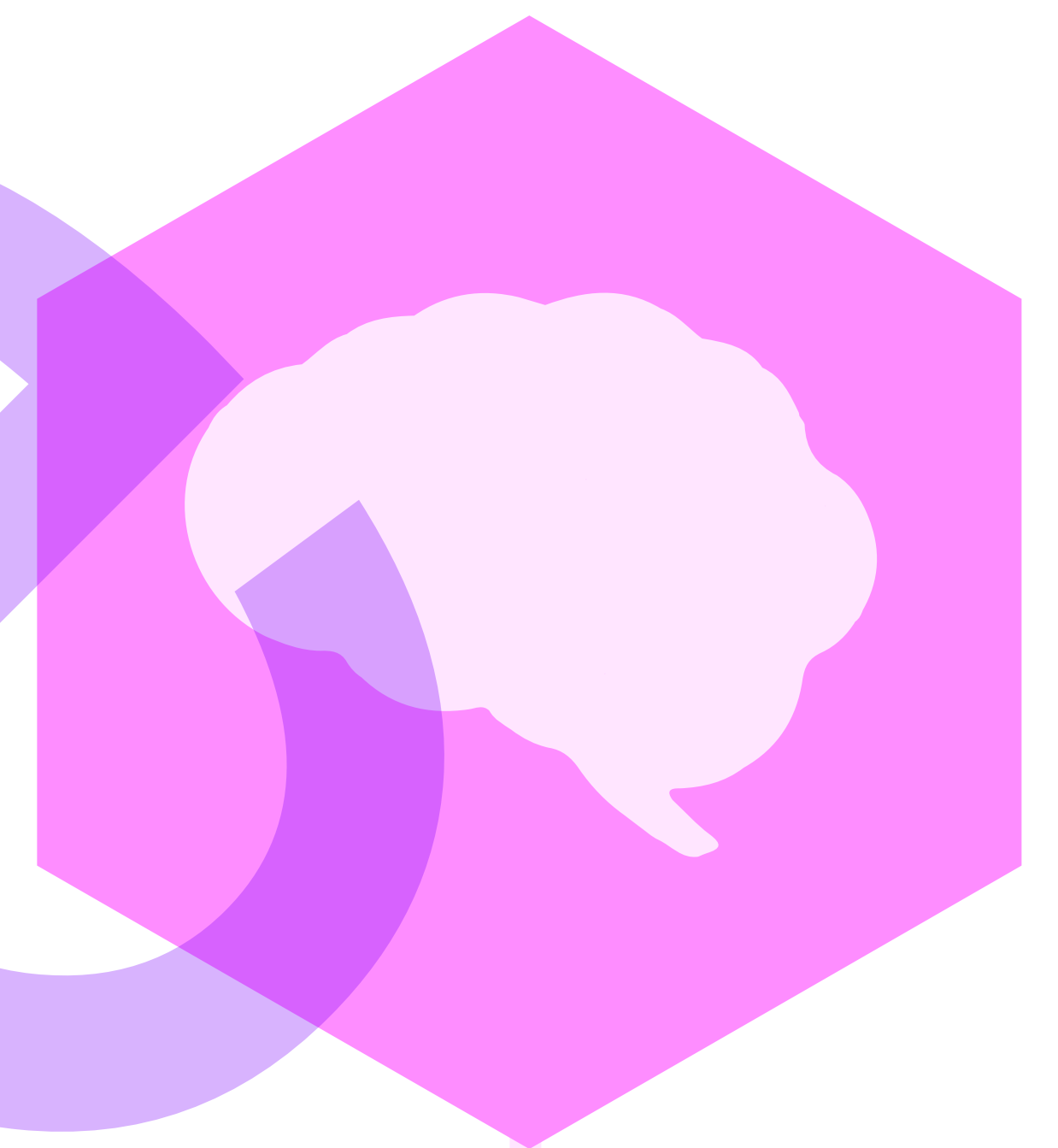




# How should I make a decision about using birth control?

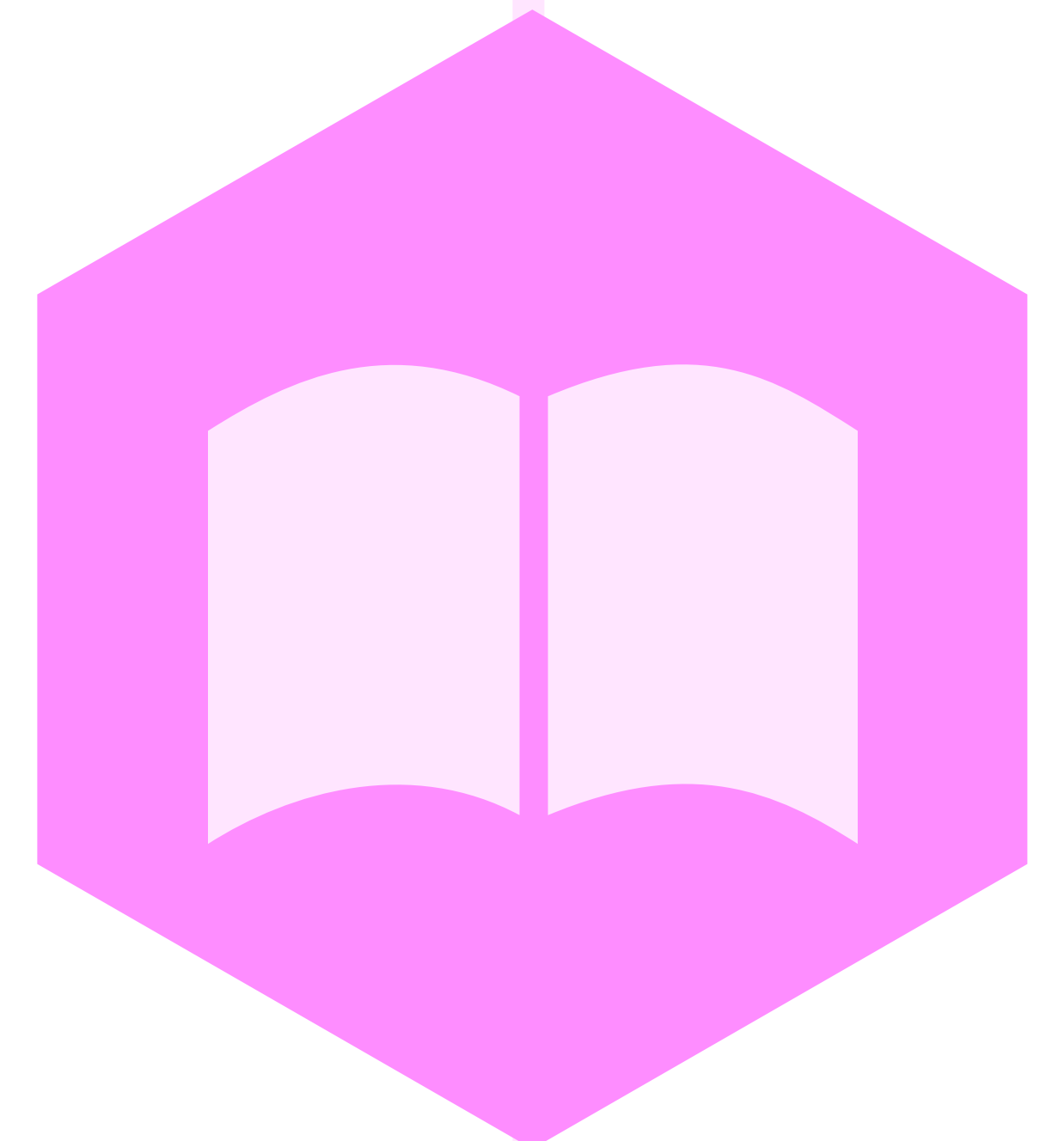
## 1 Remember that children are a blessing from God.

Psalm 127:3 says, "Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward." Much of the personal turmoil about the use of contraception can be alleviated if we simply remember that children are a blessing, not a curse. They are also the natural result of marriage.



## 2 Remember that God commands us to be fruitful and multiply.

We hear in Genesis 1:28, "And God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'" The use of contraception by a married couple to prevent ever having kids defies God's design for marriage and is wrong.



## 3 God gives His people commandments to live by,

and Exodus 23:13 records one of them: "You shall not murder." God forbids murder. Because abortifacient birth control methods have the potential to end life, they should not be used.



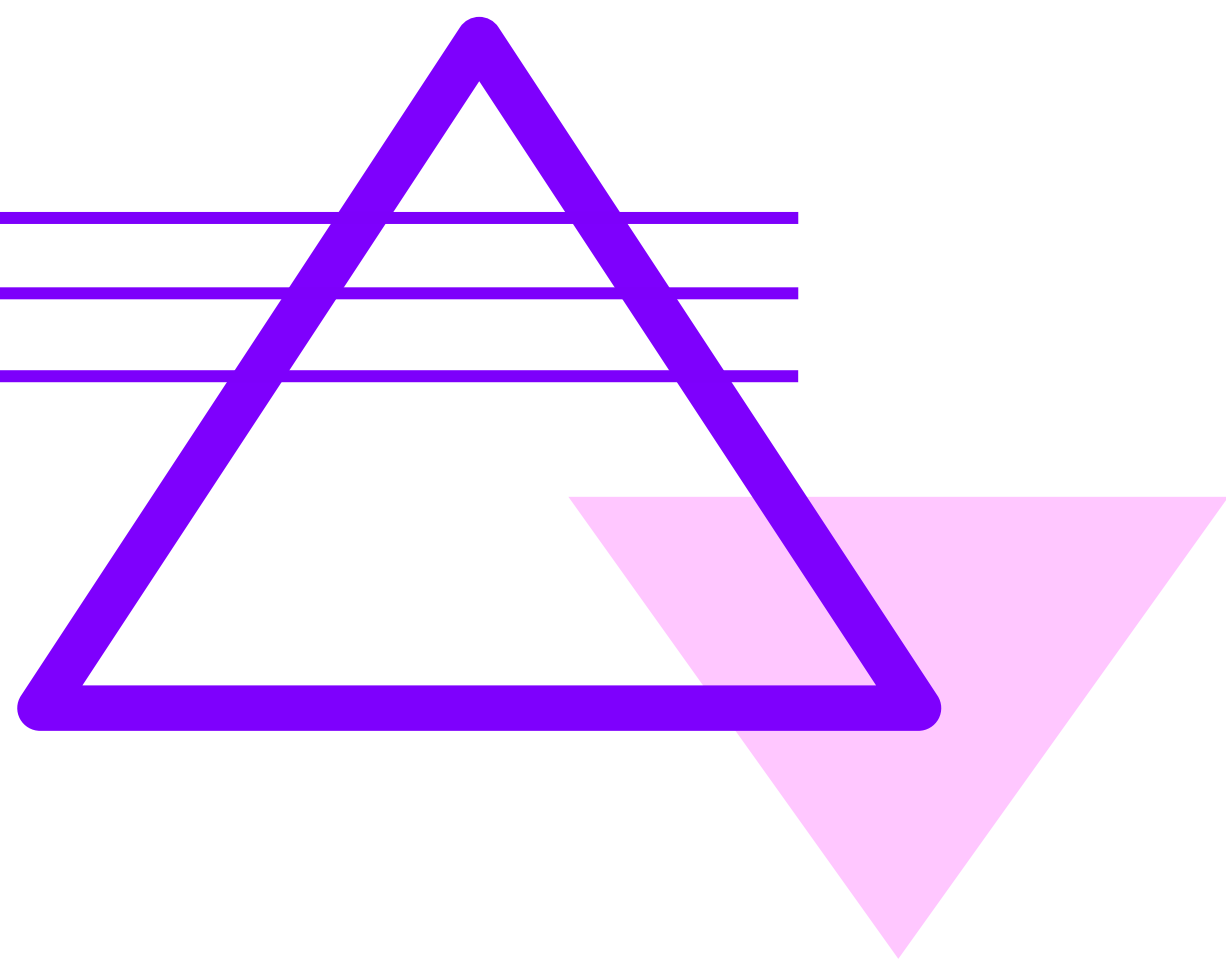


## 4 Read up on the facts.

The overview given here is by no means an exhaustive list of all specific types of birth control, their effects, and their side effects. It is important that you understand what you are using and how it affects your body. Organizations such as American Association of Pro-Life OBGYNs (AAPLOG) and Human Life International (HLI) have free resources and blog posts written by medical professionals that can help guide your research.

## 5 Remember that God does and should determine family size!

Although we might employ our reason in making smart decisions about when to try for children, we should never forget that God both opens and closes the womb. We remember the stories of Sarah and Hannah -- both women were barren, yet each was eventually gifted with children in God's timing (Genesis 18:9-15; 21:1-7; 1 Samuel 1:1-20). God is in control and can certainly gift us children even at times when we did not “plan” to have them! These children, too, should be welcomed joyfully.

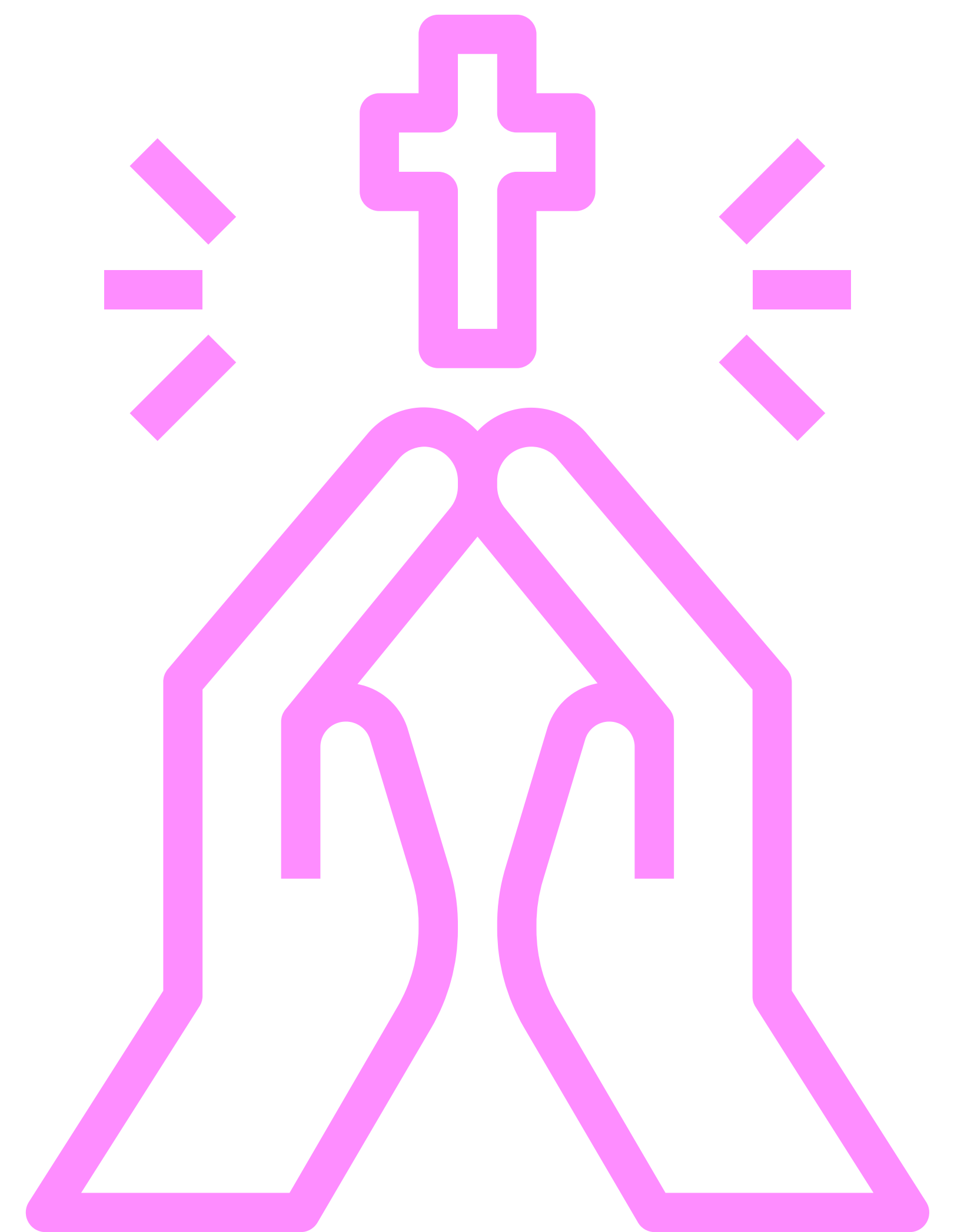


## 6 Reflect on your motives.

Are you drawn to contraception because you just don't want children or because you want more time and money to pursue what you enjoy? As Christians, we recognize that marriage is a vocation of service -- service to spouse and family. Choosing not to have children for self-serving reasons undermines the purpose of marriage. However, considering contraception because it would best serve one's spouse and family may be a more God-pleasing use of contraception. Prayerfully consider your reasons(s) for using contraception.

## Finally, we live in God's grace!

If we have made decisions that aren't life-affirming in the past, we can be certain that God stands ready to forgive and show His mercy to all who wish to receive it. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." - 1 John 1:9





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For more information on birth control and the theology of marriage, visit [Y4Life.org](http://Y4Life.org) or email [michelle@y4life.org](mailto:michelle@y4life.org).

