

## Teen Abortion, Parenting and Adoption: Trends, Issues, and Challenges | Mark Chironna, Ph.D.

**Introduction:** The reason people adopt are as varied as there is the number of children available to be adopted. But, adoptive parents must be aware of the reasons they adopt and what issues can result if not for healthy productive reasons. This lesson will help those interested in adopting, those who already adopted, or those whose family members aided adoptive families.

### I. Reasons people adopt

- A. As a result of a loss: most parents that adopt because they cannot have their own children; fertility issues; before you begin you deal with adoption...you have to deal with the loss. You have to make sure you can bring about closure and let go of the idealized child. As an adoptive parent, you have to let go of the child you "hoped for".
  - 1. Miscarriage
  - 2. Fertility issues
  - 3. Death
  - 4. Various other reasons
- B. Deal with the loss first
- C. Emotional, spiritual and physical preparation is necessary
  - 1. Let go of the idolized child you hoped for
  - 2. Process your grief and loss
  - 3. Mourn
  - 4. Cope and accept
  - 5. Let go and move on

### II. The framework of the adoptive family

- A. An intentional family: a decision was made by the adoptive parents.
- B. Bound together by love
- C. Bound together by choice: bound together by common belief. Bound together by the daily renewal of what the family is supposed to be.
- D. Daily renewal of what family is supposed to be

### III. Cross-cultural adoptive issues

- A. Caucasian's are the majority of adoptive families; the majority of adoptive children are not Caucasian.
- B. Cross-cultural children are the most adopted
- C. Find out as much as possible about child's family history & their own personal history.
  - 1. Older adopted children are more challenging
  - 2. Adopted adolescents exhibit more psychological and school related issues than non-adopted children.
  - 3. Adopted at birth has much fewer issues
- D. Deal with respectable adoption agency

### IV. Challenges with adoptive children

- A. Cognitive development
- B. Formation of the adoptive identity
- C. Adoptive mother representation and external behaviors

**V. Every adopted child has two families**

- A. They may or may not want to know birth family
- B. Adoptees value openness
  - 1. When openness occurs – facilitates the development of a fully integrated and coherent sense of self in adopted child
  - 2. Less challenges as an adolescent
- C. The adopted family need to be secure: you have to be secure enough in God that you can accept when your child seeks to know about their birth parents

**VI. Bonding issues in adopted children**

- A. Mutual attachment between a parent and child is formed at birth. Allowing the child to feel safe and secure.
- B. Within the first six weeks of birth– Ability to deal with most bonding issues easier
- C. Older child – Bonding is more difficult
- D. Unconditional love necessary – Parent to child
- E. Develop a sense of security and safety – closeness and commitment (in affirmation)
- F. Early bonding serves as a foundation for identity in adolescence

**VII. Four basic needs of human beings**

- A. Need for belonging: they are aware of the difference (cross-cultural) at a very young age. God showing how creative he is.
- B. Sense of freedom
  - 1. Opportunities to think and reason: make decision about what they're doing in their lives.
  - 2. Have fun and build memories.
- C. Belief that you can make a difference. Prv 22:6 recognizing God's gifting and directing them.

**VIII. Destiny imprints**

- A. Gifts
- B. Abilities
- C. Affinities

**IX. Effective parenting of adopted children**

- A. Embrace
  - 1. Be supportive of the child's search for self identity
  - 2. Be aware of honoring their birth parents
  - 3. Be caring
- B. Inspire
  - 1. Be affirming: the word affirm = "to give strength"; you want to learn how to inspire your child.
  - 2. Open lines of communication
- C. Sustain
  - 1. Be involved
  - 2. Be a role model and mentor: that facilitates healthy boundaries
  - 3. Provide healthy boundaries

**X. Awareness issues of child development in adopted children**

- A. Infancy
  - 1. Positive attachment and bonding. Absolutely essential
  - 2. High touch. Need to be held and make sure they get a lot of attention
- B. Early childhood
  - 1. Open communication of adoptive status.
  - 2. Less psychological needs: share stories of how God adopted people in the bible and how you and I are adopted children. Be open with them.

- C. Middle/Late children
  - 1. May want more
  - 2. Become ambivalent
  - 3. Don't panic – Open communication: it is normal.
- D. Adolescence/Puberty
  - 1. Brain development issues
  - 2. More Awareness of adoptive status. Understand that it is ok to NOT be a perfect parent.
  - 3. Be supportive

**Soul Care Notes:**

Psalms 68:6

Proverbs 22:6

**Study Questions:**

1. What are some of the reasons people adopt?
2. Explain the four awareness issues of the adoptive family.
3. Discuss cross-cultural adoptive issues.
4. What are some challenges with adoptive children?
5. Explain "every child has two families".
6. What are some bonding issues in adoptive children?
7. Discuss the four basic needs of human being and how they relate to adoptive children.