**Single and Pregnant – How the church treats unwed mothers – Program Outline.**

The purpose of this program is to address the role of the church as it relates to the treatment of unwed mothers. The content of this program is based on interviews held within my (The Digital Disciple’s) church. Feel free to conduct your own interviews to get feedback from persons in your church. The focus of the program is on women as I found they were the ones who had disheartening experiences within the church after becoming pregnant out of wedlock, but we also interviewed men and speak to their experiences. The program is in the format of a talk show. The ‘Guest’ has conducted interviews with unwed mothers within the church and is appearing on the talk show to share his/her findings. The program is designed to be interactive and allow the congregation to comment during certain times throughout the talk show.

Key Text – Galatians 6:1-2 (NLT) “Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. Share each other’s burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.

Opening Prayer

Song Service/Praise and worship

Key Text

Welcome

Talk Show

Closing Thoughts – (Ask you pastor or elder to give closing thoughts or recap key points you want the audience to remember)

Closing Song

Closing Prayer

**(Find some instrumental talk show music to play at the beginning of the show)**

**Talk show host:** Hello I’m **[Name of Talk Show Host]** and welcome to a special segment of **[Name of Talk Show]** the show where we discuss the pressing issues our youth are facing today. Here at **[Name of Talk Show]** we keep it real, relevant and relatable. Our topic for this evening's show is Single and Pregnant - How the church treats unwed mothers. Here with us today we have **[Name of Guest].** Thank you so much for joining our show.

**Guest:** Thank you for having me.

**Talk show host: [Name of Guest]**, you’ve been conducting some interviews within the church recently with women who got pregnant out of wedlock. Can you share a little bit about that?

**Guest:** Well **[Name of Talk Show Host]** we believe that in order to have an effective **[Name of Talk Show]** segment on this issue, we would need to interview persons who went through the experience of having a child out of wedlock. So, I’ve conducted interviews with women within the church so we can have firsthand accounts of woman who had this experience.

**Talk show host:** Wow, interesting. Based on the interviews you conducted, what were some of the initial reactions to these individuals had when discovering they were pregnant?

**Guest:** All of them had mixed emotions. While all of them wanted to be mothers one day, they did not want to have a child out of wedlock. There was regret, disappointment, fear, excitement, happiness – there was a mixture of emotions.

**Talk show host:** What was it like going to church at those initial stages of pregnancy for these women?

**Guest:** A lot of them had negative experiences. They received stares at church and felt like they were being shunned or avoided by persons who were they were once close with and that was quite hurtful. They received disrespectful comments and the child was called a mistake when the mistake was sex outside of marriage. Others felt like they were being attacked being consistently approached and condemned.

**Talk show host**: So, it really sounds like individuals in the church had a problem with their approach. Now if you didn't know this talk show is very interactive. We love to get feedback from our audience. If at any time you have a question or comment, feel free to raise your and our crew will bring you a mic. So, I want to ask our audience, many of these women felt attacked. How should we approach someone when we find out they are pregnant out of wedlock? (Receive answers from audience)

Is being pregnant out of wedlock a sin? (Receive Answers from audience)

As a young person in the church if your friend becomes pregnant out of wedlock, should you distance yourself from that person because they are now seen as bad company? (Receive answers from audience)

Why is it that there is such a negative reaction to a woman who is pregnant out of wedlock? Aren’t we all sinners? Why is there such a stigma attached to these women? (Receive answers from audience)

**Guest:** While you can express disappointment, we need to remember that we also need to be a pillar of support and encouragement for the person. Being pregnant is not a sin but the result of a sin. It’s important to realize that pregnancy and the child is not the sin but the result of the sin.

**Talk show host:** So, tell me was it all negative, the attitudes these women experience from other church members?

**Guest:** No, it was not all negative. There were positive experiences. There were church members who brought gifts, members visited them to ensure they were okay, they received words of encouragement love and support from some members.

**Talk show host**: I want to ask our audience, Is there any distinction between the blessing of a baby born in wedlock vs. in wedlock? (Receive answers from audience)

**Guest:** You know **[Name of Talk show host]**, I want to share, Children are a blessing from the Lord according to the Bible ([Psalm 127:3-5](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%20127.3-5)). Period. There is no distinction between a human life born in marriage or a human life born out of wedlock.

In the Bible it says God forms every child, including those conceived out of wedlock, not just those born in marriage. Bible verses like [Psalm 139:13-16](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%20139.13-16) apply to every out of wedlock pregnancy just as it does to every other pregnancy: “For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.” Premarital sex is a sin. Having children is a blessing.

**Question to the Talk show host:** So, I have to ask did you interview any men who got pregnant out of wedlock?

**Guest:** Yes, actually men were interviewed. We thought it best to also get a male’s perspective or experience.

**Question to the Talk show host:** Oh interesting, and what were your findings?

**Guest**: For the ones that I interviewed they don't recall having any negative experiences compared to the women.

**Open question to the audience**: Interesting, why do you think men are treated so differently, do we have a double standard here? (Receive answers from audience)

**Guest**: You know **[Name of Talk show host]** I think it's important to realize that just as we discipline and correct in love our females we also should treat the males the same way.

**Talk show host:** Yes, I agree. Wow what a great discussion we are having. We are going to pause for a quick break and we’re going to go into our **[Name of Game]** segment.

**Game/Ice Breaker Segment –** *Have someone lead out in a bible-based game or bible trivia with the audience.*

**Talk show host:** Thanks so much **[Name of person]** for leading out in our **[Name of Game]** segment. Now, **[Name of Guest]**, you mentioned an important word before we went on break. Discipline. I’m curious did any of the women feel that they were unjustly treated when they were disciplined, for example being removed from their church positions?

**Talk show host:** No not all in fact in many cases I found that they resigned from their positions and had a discussion with their pastor who was appreciative of their honesty. They understood that there were consequences for their actions.

**Talk Show host:** Okay, okay. You know I want to talk about a hot issue here. We have many of instances where these women are giving an outstanding performance at their jobs in a Christian organization but they are terminated when they get pregnant out of wedlock. You know I can understand the decision to remove someone from a church position but is it really Christian-like to fire a pregnant young woman especially if it’s their only source of income? (Receive answers from audience)

We are all sinners. That is a fact. Why does it seem like we are dismissing persons for the sin of sex out of marriage but not other sins? (Receive answers from audience)

What else can the church do to support her during this time if we still decide to fire persons who get married outside of wedlock? (Receive answers from audience)

**Guest:** I want to share this example with you that occurred at a Christian Elementary School in Berrien Springs, Michigan, May 2005. After school officials learned that Christine John, a kindergarten teacher, was four months pregnant with her husband of two months, they [placed her on administrative leave](http://www.motownsports.com/forums/archive/index.php/t-27391.html) until her contract expired. A school spokesman told the Associated Press that John’s contract allowed the school to terminate her immediately for engaging in premarital sex. The school was honoring her contract until the end of the school year, he said, “out of compassion.”

I think as Christians it’s important for us to have discipline while showing forgiveness and love.[Hebrews 12:10-11 says](https://www.biblestudytools.com/passage/?q=hebrews+12:10-11) ‘[They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. 11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.’ Just as Gods’ discipline is evidence of that he cares for us I think we need to realize that the church’s’ discipline is also evidence they care for us. But we must ensure that the discipline is carried out in love with a forgiving heart and in accordance with God’s guidelines in Matthew 18.](https://www.biblestudytools.com/passage/?q=hebrews+12:10-11)

**Talk show host:** I understand that sometimes there is heated controversy around having baby showers for persons out of wedlock.

**Guest:** Yes. Some members feel like a shower is a great way to support the single mother and their love. Others feel that having a shower is showing that we are celebrating of condoning the sin. I also noted that if a shower is held there is also conflicting opinions on whether it is held on church grounds or not. So, they are a lot of different views.

**Talk show host:** Audience, what are your thoughts? Can we not throw a shower for this little miracle that is entering the world?

**Guest:** The point of a shower is to basically “shower” the mother-to-be with gifts for her expected baby. Attending a shower of an unwed mother doesn’t have to be a sign of support for sex outside the context of marriage. After all, pregnancy itself is not a sin. While the circumstance of the baby’s conception may be grave matter for the parents, it does not affect the child’s worth and value. Giving the expectant mother a gift for her baby is not only charitable, but it affirms the sanctity of life and her choice to bring that life into the world. That’s something worth celebrating!

**Talk show host:** What about after the baby was born? What are some of the attitudes these women faced? Was there any change?

**Guest:** There were many women who felt the negativity decreased with time and things got better but one thing that was also noted was they felt there was a pressure for baptism.

**Open question to the audience**: Interesting, audience what do you think? I know we want the best for our youth but is it right to pressure them for rebaptism? (Receive answers from the audience)

**Guest:** I think it’s important that we remember that Baptism is a public confession or demonstration of your faith in, and commitment to, Jesus Christ. A result of something that has happened on the inside. It’s never appropriate to pressure anyone but pray that the Holy spirit convicts that person so they can make the decision for themselves.

**Talk show host**: So true, so true. Audience, what kind of support can the church offer to single young mothers and fathers in the church? (Receive answers from the audience)

**Guest:** Great answers from the audience. There are many ways we can support them:

(1) Offer to babysit

(2) Encouragement and support and system

(3) Men in the church can offer to do handy work needed around the home of single mothers

**Talk show host:** Jesus often reached out to marginalized women (prostitutes, widows etc.) Does any story come to mind and what principles can we take from him? (Receive answers from the audience)

**Guest:** One story I’d like to share is the story of Hagar. She was a single mom. Hagar flees after receiving poor treatment. Finding a spring of water in the wilderness, she sits—pregnant, homeless, and alone. The passage does not even say that she cried out to God. But the angel of the Lord comes to her with a word of encouragement. Hagar said, "You are the God who sees me; I have now seen the One who sees me" ([Genesis 16:13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%2016.13)). The fact that God saw her in her predicament was a big encouragement. Likewise, single moms you can be assured that God sees you, He sees your situation and will be a source of strength for you.

**Talk show host:** Wow this has really been a great time at **[Name of talk show]**. Thank you **[Name of Guest]** for being on the show and thank you audience for your active participation. **[Name of person]** will now come to being us closing thoughts for our show.

**Closing Thoughts**

**(Find some instrumental talk show music to play at the end of the show)**

**Talk show host:** Thank for those closing words **[Name of Person]**, really food for thought. Well, that ends another exciting segment of **[Name of talk show]**. I’m **[Name of Talk Show Host]** until next time remember to keep it real relevant and relatable.