

Saying the Right Words to Our Barren Sisters in Christ

By **Katie Schuermann**
Leader's Notes

1. Answers may vary, but here are examples of false promises:

“If you pray like Hannah, God will give you a child.”

“If you do *in vitro* fertilization (IVF), God will give you a child.”

“If you raise your cervix for 30 minutes after intercourse, you will get pregnant.”

“If you begin the adoption process, you will get pregnant.”

“If you just relax, you'll get pregnant.”

“If you have enough faith, God will reward you with a child.”

“If you do good works, you will earn favor with God and get a child.”

2. John 3:16, Romans 5:8 (God promises to love you);

Matthew 1:20–21, Mark 16:16, Romans 6:3–14 (God promises to save you from your Sin);

Galatians 3:26–4:7 (God promises, in Baptism, to adopt you into His family and make you an heir of heaven);

Hebrews 13:5, Matthew 18:20, Exodus 20:24b,

John 1:1, Matthew 26:26–29 (God promises never to leave you but faithfully to come to you through the reading of His Word and in the Holy Supper);

Matthew 6:30–32 and 10:29–31, Colossians 1:17 (God promises to provide all that you need to support this body and life);

Psalm 34:4, 15, and 17; Psalm 86:7 (God promises to hear and answer your prayers);

Matthew 28:20b (God promises that He will be with you always, to the very end).

3. Psalm 127:3 (Children are a heritage from the Lord),

Genesis 1:26–28 (a blessing spoken by God over upon the institution of marriage),

Psalm 139:13–14 (and a gift given by the omnipotent Creator).

4. The presence of Sin in this world is physical as well as spiritual. As a result of Adam and Eve's fall into Sin in the Garden of Eden, our bodies are now broken; that brokenness causes many people to suffer from diseases which affect fertility.

5. [Question a] Barrenness is not a punishment for any Christian's individual sins. We know this to be true because God does not punish His baptized children for their sins; He already punished His son Jesus on the cross in their place.

[Question b] All of us are “bad” Christians. Romans 3:10 ESV (*As it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one”*), and Romans 3:23 ESV (*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*).

6. Page 1852 of the *Concordia Self-Study Bible* states: “Three possible meanings of this verse are: (1) It speaks of the godly woman finding fulfillment in her role as wife and mother in the home; (2) it refers to women being saved spiritually through the most significant birth of all, the incarnation of Christ; or (3) it refers to women being kept physically safe in childbirth.”

7. Romans 8:35–39 (Nothing, not even barrenness and the death of our children, can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.);
Revelation 21:5 (Christ will make all things new on the Last Day.);
John 16:33 (This world is broken and unjust, but Jesus has overcome the world.);
Romans 8:28 (Nowhere in Scripture does God promise the gift of children to every person. God does promise, however, to work all things, even barrenness for the good of those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose.);
Lamentations 3:17–24 (God is faithful, and His mercies are new every morning.)

8. Answers may vary, but here are examples of ways to care for a grieving sister in Christ: pray with and for her, sit with her in her grief and cry with her, listen to her, read her a Psalm, sing her a hymn, take care of her physical needs (cook a meal, mow a lawn, drive her to doctor's appointments, etc.), alert her pastor to her needs, encourage her to be in church, pick her up for church events, invite her to be a part of your own family traditions.