

40 Years After Roe v. Wade: One Abortion Survivor's Story

The Supreme Court legalized abortion in this country 40 years ago. That is an intensely personal issue for my friend Chris Foster, a pastor in Pennsylvania who happens to be 40 years old. He was born just three months before the **Roe v. Wade** case was decided.

Chris grew up in central New York in a troubled family. He sometimes struggled with his identity because his stepfather spoke about “adopting” him. Chris didn’t understand what that meant. Later, when he was 16, his sister told him during a fight he was a “bastard.” Chris got angry—and realized there were issues about his past that were being hidden from him.

Chris’ mom tried to change the subject when he asked about his sister’s cruel comment. But Chris was left with nagging doubts. Who was his biological father?

Chris began a personal relationship with Jesus when he was 17 and then headed to Bible college. But five years later, after he had married his wife, Amy, he learned the shocking truth about his conception: His mother had been raped by a drunken stranger while she was visiting some friends. The result was an unwanted pregnancy.

According to the technical definition of *bastard*, Chris’ sister was right. He was illegitimate.

“My doctor told me I should have aborted you,” Chris’ mother told him. Thankfully she didn’t have the heart to end her baby’s life.

All kinds of negative thoughts began to torment Chris after he learned the ugly facts about his birth. “I cried over it,” Chris told me. “I felt rejected. I felt embarrassed. What

would people think? It felt like nobody wanted me. I felt like I didn't have a purpose because I didn't really have a dad."

He wondered if he should search for his father. Did his dad even know he existed? Was he so drunk that night that he didn't know he had produced a son? Chris finally decided to stop looking. Instead, he pursued God more than ever, grew spiritually and discovered his ministry calling.

Today, Chris is what I call a trophy of God's grace. If you don't believe in the goodness of Jesus, just look at the picture of Chris and his family for a few minutes.

Some people with Chris' history might spend the rest of their lives in counseling. But Chris found healing simply by accepting the fact that Jesus loves him unconditionally. He has no issues with his mom—"I love her so much; I felt so bad for her, and for what happened to her," he says—and he wants only the best for the man who fathered him.

Chris knows that the facts about his birth have no impact on him today. He's a loving husband and a successful pastor of the 700-member New Life Church in Lancaster, Pa. Chris and Amy have adopted a 5-year-old son who is African-American, and next week they will finalize the adoption of their daughter, who is of Peruvian descent.

"I am obviously anti-abortion because of my experience," says Chris, who admits he can get quite emotional about the issue. Because his son is black, he is especially concerned about the high rate of abortion among African-Americans. "I view abortion as genocide, especially in the black community," he says.

But Chris doesn't have to fight abortion with protest signs and angry words. He doesn't have to shout at anyone. He just has to walk down the street with his children. Anybody who knows his story should tip his hat in respect.

It's been a while since I've seen a more beautiful picture of Christ's unselfish love. A guy who was once "unwanted" is now embracing children who were unwanted—and teaching a congregation how to model compassion in a broken world that thinks it's okay to kill babies.

J. Lee Grady *is the former editor of Charisma and the director of The Mordecai Project (). You can follow him on Twitter at @leegrady. His latest book is Fearless Daughters of the Bible.*

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