

Planned Parenthood, Ashley Madison and Faith

The world is falling apart, or at least it seems that way when my Facebook news feed is filled with stories on Planned Parenthood, Josh Duggar's sexual sins, and the marital cheating website Ashley Madison. As a Christian there's a lot to process, and we wonder what we should say and how to take a stand. **Yet if we are truly followers of God's Word our "stand" should be more than just a repost or comment on Facebook.** Thirty years from now when our grandchildren read about these things in the history books they're not going to ask, "What did you think?" But "What did you do?"

So what can we do? Keep reading ...

1. Planned Parenthood

Personally I'm not surprised by what I learned about Planned Parenthood. As a 15-year-old scared teen I went in for counseling in a Planned Parenthood office, and I was flat out lied to. I was told that an abortion was "scraping away a few cells" and it would bring a lot of relief. Even though the choice was my own—and I take full responsibility for that choice—I still trusted what they told me. Both statements were untrue. I later learned my baby had a beating heart. I also faced years of depression, shame and regret. **Only the love, grace and forgiveness of Jesus has pulled me out of that pit.** So I can truly understand why women go to Planned Parenthood. I know the worry of thinking, "I'm going to have to parenting a child all alone and that's just not possible." It's up to us, as a body of Christians, to take those worries away.

Each of us needs to use the voice we have to share about what Planned Parenthood is doing within our sphere of influence, but we should not stop there. **The greatest act of being pro-**

life is loving and helping those who have chosen to have their children and need help.

God's Word tells us to care for the orphans and widows in their distress (James 1:27). I think it's safe to say that teen and single moms should be considered widows and their children orphans in our society. They are often abandoned and neglected. They struggle for basic necessities, yet God asks us to care for them. He wants us to reach out with love and compassion to help with their greatest needs. And ... what do you think would happen if we did?

1. Young women considering abortion would see that help is available, and they wouldn't feel alone. They would have hope. They would have no fear of their future as a single mom.
2. Young women loved on by Christians would also wonder about this Christ they talk about and consider seeking Him themselves. They would be drawn to the love and look to make changes in their own lives.
3. Children would grow up surrounded by positive, godly examples who would be available to break the cycle. How can children make positive choices with their own lives if they do not witness these things themselves?

How can you help a young or single mom?

First, step out of your comfort zone and go where they are. Volunteer at a crisis pregnancy center or local high school. Check to see if there are any teen support groups in your area through organizations like **Teen MOPS** or **Embrace Grace** ... or start one!

Second, help them with their needs. Here is a blog I wrote about **17 Ways to Reach Out to Single Parents**. Pray and ask God how you can help. Then try to do one thing a month ... it'll make a huge difference in the life of young mothers!

Serving young or single moms will impact the lives and hearts

of women. If you truly detest what you've learned about Planned Parenthood, then **be the answer** in a woman's life today by helping her with her greatest needs.

But before you can be the answer ... there might be some business that you need to take care of in your heart first.

2. Ashley Madison

I was horrified—and thankful—to read about the revelation about Josh Duggar's Ashley Madison accounts. I first heard about the company Ashley Madison when FamilyLife spoke out against the cheating website, but I had no idea that they have 39 million registered users from around the world ... 39 MILLION people who want to have an affair. 39 million people who are paying to make infidelity possible. Like all shocking news stories, the revelation about Josh Duggar made us aware of a huge problem and a growing trend of marital unfaithfulness.

So why am I thankful? I'm thankful that what was hidden is now in the light, so we can talk about it and do something about it. **What can Christians do in an Ashley Madison world? Love our spouses. Uplift the beauty of faithfulness in marriage, and reach out to those who are struggling with sexual sins.**

I'm also thankful for Josh's sake, that his sin was revealed. Even though this is hard on him, his lovely wife, and his family, **healing and restoration only come when sin is brought into the light.** All of us are tempted in many ways, but we can only find help for our struggles with honesty and hope. Nowhere in the Bible does it tell us to attempt to conquer our sinful natures alone. That is impossible!

Maybe, like Josh Duggar, you have a sin that you've been hiding. Know that you don't have to remain hidden in fear.

James 5:16 says, "Confess your faults to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much."

Confession is the only way we will find help and healing from sexual sin and all other sins. We need to confess to our families and to God. We need to seek forgiveness, and we must ask for accountability. We must ask God to fill us and bring strength to our weaknesses.

If you're dealing with sin in your own life, here are three things you need to know.

1. **Hidden Sins Grow.** Do you sin? Yes, we all do. Maybe your secret sin is small in comparison to porn addiction or cheating on your spouse, but if you are hiding ANYTHING from someone you love then it's a sign that something's wrong and you need help. Little sins that are hidden soon grow into big sins. If you're hiding out of guilt and fear then you need to confess. Hiding a problem does not lead to a solution. Instead it builds up walls and isolates us.
2. **Confessing Ushers in Healing.** Confession, on the other hand, is the first step to getting the help we need. God has provided each of us with a great protective and restoring resource, and that is the body of Christ. In the past I've confessed my **sins of abortion** and an **emotional affair** to Christian friends whom I trusted, and they rallied around me. They prayed with me and for me. They sent me Scriptures passages, and they spoke the hard truth—things I needed to hear. Having friends to be accountable to broke Satan's hold on me. Knowing they would ask about how I was doing caused me to turn to God, instead of trying to fight (and fail) alone. If you're hiding a sin, know that you don't have to fight your battle alone. If you have Christian friends—or a spouse—whom you can trust, turn to them. If you don't, FamilyLife has a great (and free!) resource called **eMentoring**. When you reach out for help, you are taking the first step to change.
3. **Change is Possible.** Maybe you're reading this and

thinking, "Change for me is impossible." Yes, that would be true if it were just up to you. It's not. Jesus wants to be there for you. Jesus died so you don't have to carry those burdens of sin anymore. He not only wants to offer your forgiveness, He also wants to offer you Himself. Whatever your struggle is, turn to Jesus. Remember that you can't change alone.

This world is a hard place to live. Horrible things, like the destruction of human life by Planned Parenthood is happening around us, but we can best step out to help fight the horrors the world when our inner man has won our own battle with sin first. And inviting Jesus in is the only way to win.

When it comes to dealing with the horrors of Planned Parenthood ... **do something**. And when it comes to battling own sin ... **do something**. Jesus will help you whenever you need it however you need it. But whatever you do, *do not just sit back and keep silent or stay hidden*. When you step out you're taking the love of Christ in you. And when you look inward, and seek healing, only then can you be a person to offer Jesus' healing and grace to others in need.

Do something.

Do it today.

Do it with Jesus' help.

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