

What Happened When I Told My Daughter About My Abortion

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"She needs to hear it from you, not from someone else"—those words from my wife lingered all day. The movie *Unplanned* was just released while I was at the National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) conference, and my wife, daughter and son went to see it. Our church, Westside Christian Fellowship, reserved two theaters that evening for the opening. Ironically, as I was leaving the NRB event, I saw Abby Johnson a few feet away being interviewed about the movie.

On the way home, I decided to tell my daughter about my past. The guilt and shame returned, as it often does. Even though I speak tirelessly about God's grace and unending love, it's not always easy to embrace it myself.

As I wrote in a past op-ed that you can read [here](#), as a prodigal, I conceded to my girlfriend's request to abort our child around the fifth week of conception many years ago. The pain of that decision still haunts me. What would the child look like today? Was it a boy or a girl? I can picture walking and talking with my child ... watching his or her first steps ... holding them when they cry and rejoicing with them when they succeed. But these are just dreams in my mind, dreams that often leave me heartbroken. Regret is one of the hardest pains to deal with because it is a constant reminder that we failed—failed God, others, and the aborted child.

Groups such as Planned Parenthood say there are little if any emotional scars for those involved, that the baby is just tissue. This is very deceptive—the emotional scars can last a

lifetime. And it's not just women who feel the pain; men often carry tremendous guilt as well. But thank God there is hope; watch this short clip we put together a few years ago that Focus on the Family featured on its website.

All throughout the day, I was dreading this discussion. Then, standing in the kitchen talking about the movie, I quickly blurted out, "I supported my girlfriend's request to abort many years ago." I was hoping my daughter wouldn't catch it. I was hoping that it wouldn't affect me or her, but I was wrong. I will never forget the look of disappointment and confusion that flashed across her face. It seemed to cry, "Wait! What did you say? Dad, are you kidding?"

A mountain of tears welled up inside me as she realized I had agreed to end the life of her half-brother or sister; it was too much to bear. Even though she gave me a hug, I felt shallow and empty inside. I could tell that I let her down in a big way. I made small talk but quickly left the room. Then it really hit home: "I have four more kids to tell at some point."

Many of you may never tell your children about your past, but because mine is out in the open for the world to see I'm compelled to share it with my kids. On one hand, it's extremely difficult and humiliating, but on the other hand, it's a wonderful opportunity to share God's amazing love to a broken world. It's also a good opportunity to show our children that we need forgiveness too, and it opens the door for them to come to us when faced with tough decisions. Knowing that we've also gone through many challenges eases the performance mentality that many Christian kids develop (as in, "I must be good to be accepted").

Although we strive for purity and desire godly character in our home, our kids and yours need to be showered with grace, love, and understanding. A legalistic church is just as dangerous as a carnal one. See my wife's article for more

about raising PKs (Preacher's Kids).

As Hollywood cries "pro-choice," we must cry, "Life is God's choice." We must not only lead our children but protect them as well. As many legislators embrace infanticide, we must lovingly challenge them. Pastors, make no mistake about it, we play an enormous role in shaping the direction of the country. We can no longer remain silent while silent screams go unheard. Deep repentance must take place at the individual and national level because our consciences have been seared. Our job is to preach the totality of God's Word, including those hard-to-hear things so that both conviction and comfort take place. When human life is devalued, atrocities such as the Holocaust, slavery, sex-trafficking and abortion occur. God help us when we ignore our calling to confront evil.

The silent pulpit is not God's pulpit. Pastors are to be pillars who support God's absolute and unchanging truth. When was the last time you discussed this controversial topic from the pulpit? Change will not occur until we confront sin rather than hide from it. "We need more prophets in our pulpits and less puppets" (Leonard Ravenhill).

For those who say, "I don't want to get involved," we must remember that we're already involved—by saying nothing, we say something. Our government is a government of the people, by the people, for the people. This means that a believer should be involved in running for office, voting and monitoring those in office to ensure they perform their duties. The welfare of society often falls in the hands of the Christian community.

For those who believe we should remain passive and silent, I challenge you to read the writings of the Old Testament prophets. They lamented, shed tears and pleaded with the people and the leaders to turn from their sins and turn back to God—they spoke the truth in love. We should do the same.

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