

Why I'm for the Duggars

I was lying on my bed, checking Facebook when I first heard the news about **Josh Duggar** inappropriately touching five young women when he was a young teenager. I was heartbroken by the news in so many ways. I was heartbroken because of the victims. I was heartbroken for the Duggar family. I was heartbroken for Josh.

Throughout the last week I've ruminated about my response to this, and as I've prayed for this family my thoughts have settled on one thing: I am FOR the Duggars. I've been FOR them for a while. Why?

I am FOR God-fearing families who try to model godly living in a confused and hurting world.

I am FOR young couples who choose to pray for their future spouses, marry with the goal of lifelong commitment, and strive to live for God.

I am FOR homeschooling and large families, for the goal of raising children to impact the world for Christ.

Every time Duggar news made headlines at –beating out the self-serving lifestyles of Hollywood stars—I inwardly cheer. It shows people want to hear about wholesome living, young and pure love, and babies born IN wedlock.

Even after hearing news of these *horrible* acts, I am still FOR the Duggars.

I am FOR healing.

I am FOR forgiveness.

I am FOR restoration, taking what the enemy meant for evil and using it for God.

First, Healing

I haven't talked much about sexual abuse before, but it has impacted my life. Without going into detail, I dealt with inappropriateness during my growing-up years. There was much more emotional inappropriateness than physical, but it skewed my thoughts about myself, my body and my sexuality. I grew up thinking women were objects, and the only way to have a real relationship with someone was to offer myself sexually. This led to becoming sexually active at a very young age, having an abortion at age 15 and a child at age 17.

More than that, I've seen the pain sexual abuse causes. Just last year I sat in our teen MOPS meeting room with a group of young moms. We had an open conversation about sexual abuse, and I discovered nearly every one of them had been abused sexually. I saw their tears. I witnessed their pain. I heard their heartbreak. I've seen how abuse has wounded them to their core. Sexual abuse is from the pit of hell, and I mourn as I realize how many young women silently suffer.

Second, Forgiveness

I'm praying for these young women and the pain their abuse caused. I'm praying for them to find healing, and I'm praying for them to forgive. Both will happen in layers over time, but what people don't realize is that the forgiveness isn't just for Josh. It's for them too. **When we forgive others it brings healing and wholeness to our souls.** Josh doesn't deserve forgiveness—none of us do. But thankfully because of Jesus we don't have to face what we DO deserve.

I'm FOR these young women turning to Christ and seeking His face through the pain of having THEIR stories sensationalized and shared without their permission. We don't know their specific names, but while the media tries to crucify

Josh, *their story* is being shared over and over and over again.

I am FOR the Duggars to stay strong and to heal from the attacks on their family. I'm praying they will discover true friendship and a closeness to Christ through the valley. I pray for the younger children who do not completely understand. I pray their family is protected under the shadow of God's hand.

Third, Restoration

While my heart aches for these young women, my heart also aches for Josh. I made stupid, horrible choices as a young teen. I acted selfishly and sinfully. I hurt others with my actions. I hurt myself.

Josh Duggar sexually abused young women ... *horrible*. I chose to have an abortion ... *horrible*. Josh says he regrets the pain he caused. I believe him. I regret taking the life of my child. Every time our large family gathers, I think about the son or daughter who isn't there. I think about the son-in-law or daughter-in-law I don't have. I consider the missing grandchildren—and generations—who will never be.

Sin kills.

Sin destroys.

Sin hurts.

Sin robs.

Young women were robbed of purity and wholeness. Josh was robbed of dignity and respect. **Sin impacts everything forever. We can't take back the actions sin causes. We can't undo what has been done.**

And so I'm FOR Josh too. I'm FOR his restoration. I'm FOR peace. I'm FOR his family. I'm FOR his heart.

Most of all, I'm FOR Jesus. I'm FOR His glorification. I'm FOR the world realizing that *all* have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. I'm praying we will understand that without Christ, we are sinful, vile creatures. I'm praying when the dust settles the fingers will not be pointed to Josh, but to ourselves and the sin in our own hearts.

I'm for the other side of the story to be told, that ...

When we need **healing**, Jesus is the healer.

When we need **forgiveness**, Jesus is the one who forgives.

When we need **restoration**, Jesus is the ONLY one who can provide it.

Perhaps you're reading this and facing pain, shame or sin in your life. I'm for YOU too. I'm praying you'll turn to Jesus. I'm praying you'll find purity and wholeness in Him. I'm praying for your family and your heart. I'm praying God will heal all your broken places—the places where you were a victim and the places where you acted out in sin.

And in the end, when healing, forgiveness and restoration are found, I pray our finger then points heavenward as we point to the One, Jesus, who creates beauty from ashes and brings joy from mourning. May the Duggars find both in the months and years to come ... and may they know I'm FOR them and FOR all those who have been impacted by the pain and shame caused by sin.

Tricia Goyer *has written more than 35 books, including both novels that delight and entertain readers and nonfiction titles that offer encouragement and hope. She has also published more than 500 articles in national publications such as Guideposts, Thriving Family, Proverbs 31, and HomeLife Magazine.*