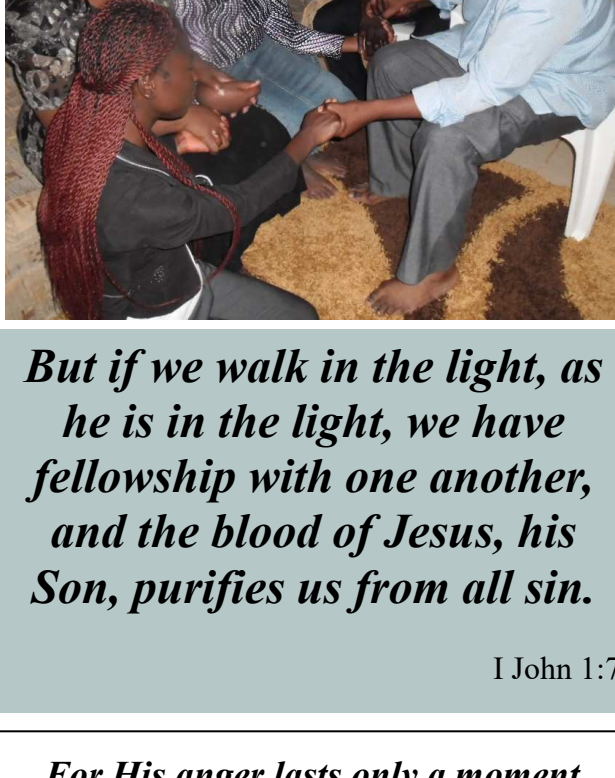


ABORTION

HELPING PEOPLE COPE WITH GRIEF AND GUILT



But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

I John 1:7

For His anger lasts only a moment, but His favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.

Psalms 30:5

IT IS TIME TO HEAL

The first step to helping yourself or others is to know the symptoms of post-abortion syndrome (PAS). There are a wide range of symptoms. The most common are:

1. Grief
2. Guilt
3. Feeling emotionally “numb”
4. Depression, perhaps even with thoughts of suicide
5. Sudden and uncontrollable crying episodes
6. Interference with relationships, including an inability to bond with his or her other children
7. Flashbacks and nightmares about the abortion
8. “Anniversary reactions”—increase of PAS on the anniversary of the actual abortion.
9. Immediately becoming pregnant again—sometimes called the ‘atonement child’. Or a preoccupation with becoming pregnant again.
10. Avoiding anything that has to do with children.
11. Anger and blaming others for her or his decision to abort.
12. Self-destructive behaviors such as alcoholism, drug abuse or promiscuity.

THE GRIEF

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

Galatians 6:2

Grief is defined as sharp, sorrowful and painful regret over affliction or loss.

When a child dies there is grief. The grieving process is sometimes helped because:

1. There are happy memories attached to that child. When a child dies, parents at least have some positive memories on which to reflect. Objects, such as a blanket or pictures, can reinforce these positive memories.
2. When a child dies, there is some closure through burial, cremation or a religious ceremony.
3. Friends and family surround the parents with loving support.
4. While some parents take on a sense of guilt, the reality is they likely did not cause the death.

However, in the case of abortion, the mother or the family made a deliberate choice to end the life of the child. The abortion often remains a secret. This deprives her and the family, of people who can help in the grieving process.

There are no happy memories for the family to reflect on. Rather they only have painful memories surrounding the decision and the actual abortion.

When a post-abortive man or woman recognizes and identifies that they are grieving over the loss of a child, healing can begin. Friends and counselors who will listen to their expressions of grief are very needed.

Provide a safe and confidential support for post-abortive people. Rejection and condemnation is not appropriate. Let the expression of their grief help them heal! It will also minister to you.

THE GUILT

“Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord.”

Lamentations 3:40

Guilt is what an individual feels when they have violated their own moral belief.

For the woman who has come to believe, at some point, either before or after the abortion, that she consented to the killing of her unborn child, the burden of guilt is relentless. There is little consolation to offer the woman who has transgressed one of nature's strongest instincts: the protection a mother extends to her young.

In fact, many post-abortive women believe that any unhappy events that have occurred since the abortion were inevitable because they "deserved it."

Guilt is not only experienced by women. Fathers, families and friends also feel guilt. They may have supported the mother in her decision or, in some instances, they may have even coerced her to have the abortion.

Abortion providers also suffer from feelings of guilt when day after day they see the gruesome results of their practices.

The guilt will bring self-destructive behaviors and negative emotions. However, when the guilt is appropriately dealt with, the process can be life renewing. In the Scripture above, God clearly wants our circumstances to draw us back to Him.

When an abortion occurs one life is destroyed. It is foolish to add further destruction through unresolved guilt.

Allow a person to freely express their guilt and assure them of your unconditional love. Then share the undeserved, but very real forgiveness through Jesus Christ. It is called God’s amazing Grace. Everyone feels renewed by it.

THE HEALING

“He [the Lord] heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.”

Psalms 147:3

Healing is simply becoming well. It is a process of mending someone who has been injured.

Healing from an abortion takes time. Each person heals in different ways and in varying times. But true healing cannot be done without understanding the Biblical concept of the forgiveness of sin.

The first step to healing is to take responsibility for the sin of abortion. We cannot make excuses or blame others. When a person accepts full responsibility then they can accept the full Grace of God’s forgiving love through Jesus Christ.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness”.

I John 1:9

The next step in healing is true repentance. The healing from the abortion only comes from true repentance, which also means we do not have permission to have another abortion.

“Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them.”

Ephesians 5: 6&7

The final step is releasing the anger. When the anger is expressed, it is released, bringing freedom.

“In your anger do not sin’: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry and do not give the devil a foothold.”

Ephesians 4:26

Reassure post-abortive people of God’s forgiveness. They will, at times, doubt the truth that they are indeed forgiven. Recall for them Scripture verses concerning this. It will bless them and you as well.

MOVING ON



Hopefully this guide has given you insight into helping someone heal from abortion. People enter various stages of healing throughout their lifetime. It will take time. In Ecclesiastes Chapter 3 we read: *“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven.”* Verse 4 says that there is *“a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance.”* God wants us to be healed and to show the world His great healing power, and its victory in us.

Moving on does not mean we forget. Rather it means that we move on empowered to help others heal and enabled to teach the painful truth about abortion.

For information on obtaining additional copies of this guide and other resources please contact Proclaim Life Global

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