

Telling Your Children About A Past Abortion

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"Mommy, I am wondering if I have a brother or sister I heaven." Those words, spoken by a child whose mother has had an abortion, can set her heart racing. She wonders if now is the time to tell and what to say to her children about a past abortion. Research done on survivor syndrome and the effect abortion has on family members indicates that children have an innate awareness of the presence of a missing sibling.

The focus of this article will be to determine whether telling a child of a past abortion may benefit the child. For those in abortion recovery, there may be pressure to tell of their past for their own spiritual growth. When we understand God's heart for children, the pressure to tell children about a past abortion seems to diminish. WE must not risk harming a child for the sake of our own healing. Despite the great need to grieve, a parent's actions, words, and thoughts have a great impact on her children. Unloading the great burden of carrying a secret can be quite a relief for persons in recovery, but we must also consider whether telling a child of a past abortion will be of benefit to the child. When we wait on the Lord for a "God moment" it is always better. In telling children about a past abortion experience we look to His word for guidelines.

According to Psalm 78, God wants us to share our stories of what He has done with our past. He wants us to tell our children (even the children not born yet) about what a great God He is, and how we are reconciled to Him.

He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which He commanded our forefathers to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget His deeds but would keep His commands. They would not be like their forefathers—a stubborn and rebellious generation, whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to Him."

This psalm encourages us to make known to the children all the great things God has done. Being forgiven and set free from a past abortion is a great testimony. He encourages us to share so our children may come to know Him and that they may put their hope in Him. The following principles will help you in deciding if, when, and how to tell your story to your child. A personal relationship with the Lord leads us into the right time and the best time to bless the child with the

good things God has done for us.

Principle one: The motive for telling must be for training, instruction, or correction of the child.

Fathers, do not exasperate your children to anger; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." Ephesians 6:4, NIV.

A mother was feeling the Lord encouraging her to tell her adult daughter about her past abortion. She prayed and asked God for the right time. The right time came when her daughter came to visit from out of state and they had time to be alone. After sharing, they cried and prayed together and the telling of her testimony brought them closer. Events would soon test the daughter with an opportunity for an abortion. She became pregnant the next Spring from an adulterous relationship. She considered abortion, but remembered her mother's painful grief and chose not to abort. She shared with her mother that if she had not known about her mother's heartache she would have chosen abortion. The baby is seen as a great blessing in their lives and the new grandmother thanks God for her obedience in sharing her painful past with her daughter. Because she knows how close her grandchild came to not being here, she encourages others to share their past in God's time.

Principle two: The motive for telling must be to encourage obedience, helping the children remain right with the Lord, and must result in the children honoring the parents.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and your mother—which is the first commandment with a promise—"That it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." Ephesians 6:1-3, NIV.

Parents must ask themselves if telling their story will encourage their child to obey. In other words, will it help the child honor his parents? We must discourage our clients from sharing with their children because they feel so "bad about themselves." Telling a child of a past abortion must be done in order to encourage obedience in one's children. An attitude of "I am so horrible, and I am so bad, and I don't deserve to be your mother: will cause a child to feel insecure. Check your attitude before telling a child your story and make sure that it honors the Father in Heaven and focuses on the great things He has done for you. The result must be that children esteem and value their parents.

For example, a mother was instructing her son on the different types of video games she would allow. They began a discussion on the difference between murder and war resulting in the son asking defiantly "Well how do you know? Have you ever killed someone?" Because she had been praying about this very issue, she gently answered "I am going to answer that question but not at this time." A sensitive spirit allowed her to remain in the parent role, instructing him and encouraging obedience. The next day they were alone in the car and she brought the subject up telling of her past abortion and her view now that it was murder. His response was awe and respect: "Is that why you are so into God? And is that why you work in abortion recovery? And is that why you feel so strongly about pro-life?" It was a tender moment, ending with the son

experiencing a great respect for his mother and a great understanding of God working in her life.

Principle three: In telling children about a past abortion, the children must not be provoked, irritated, exasperated, or resented. Do not tell in such a way that the children become bitter, discouraged, sullen and morose, or feel inferior.

Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged." Col 3:21, NIV.

We have heard of parents who have screamed at their children, "I should have aborted you like the rest." Statements like these greatly grieve the heart of God. Abortion recovery leaders must keep a sharp ear to signs of clients not bonding with their present children. Those in recovery must not unconsciously ask the child to carry grief for the parent. Unresolved abortion issues can cause feelings of rejection in a child. A surviving child is sometimes resented for being alive when the siblings are not. God wants to protect children from being the target of a parent's unhealed pain. Children are so precious to God his heart breaks when parents do not value them or cause them to feel inferior.

Our response

We must allow the children to go to Jesus with their grief and their hurt for blessing and anointing. I strongly recommend telling children of a past abortion when their relationship with the Lord is such that they can find comfort in His arms. Children who are in rebellion are not receptive to the things of God. Wait until a time when their hearts are open.

"But Jesus called them [the parents] to Him, saying, allow the little children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for to such [as these] belongs the kingdom of God." Luke 18:16, AMP.

When children have experienced God's forgiveness for their own sin they have a greater ability to go to Jesus with the loss of a sibling. In His arms they can find the same hope their parents have in the joy of seeing their siblings in heaven. Our relationship is personal and living. Trust God to lead you to the right time. He makes all things beautiful in His time.

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In the words of Franklin Delano Roosevelt "It is a terrible thing to look over your shoulder when you are trying to lead—and find no one there." We must guide, lead and tell our children in such a loving way that we don't ever end up looking over our shoulders and find that they have closed their hearts and minds to us and to their heavenly Father.