

MY CHOICE, MY LOSS

In April of 1982, I suspected I was pregnant. When I told my boyfriend of thirteen months, he was stunned. He told me to go to a doctor to make sure the home pregnancy test result was right. I went to Planned Parenthood and their test confirmed I was pregnant. My boyfriend and I talked about our options. He told me he'd go along with whatever I decided.

Moment by moment I changed my mind. Sometimes I thought about being a mom and even considered buying a crib. The next minute I was certain I'd be a terrible mother.

A couple weeks later, my boyfriend asked me to marry him, so we went to Las Vegas. I still wasn't sure what to do about the pregnancy. A week after we were married, I made an appointment to have an abortion.

At the clinic they told me I wasn't carrying a baby yet. They informed me giving birth was more dangerous than an abortion. I chose to be given general anesthesia. When I woke up, I knew I was no longer pregnant.

Four months after my abortion, I got drunk while my husband was at work. I locked the bathroom door and cut myself. Then I dipped my index finger in my blood and wrote, "I killed my baby" on the bathroom wall. I passed out, and came to after my husband got home and broke down the door.

After my abortion I couldn't stand seeing children and mothers playing together. Listening to people talk about pro-life or pro-choice issues angered me. I continued to embrace the pro-choice movement for many years after having the abortion. However, I didn't want to talk or hear about it. I also started feeling angry when people talked about their babies or showed me pictures of their children. I kept thinking, "I wish they'd just shut-up and leave me alone!"

After a time of deep prayer, guilt, regret, and remorse surfaced. I began to think about the age my baby would have been, hadn't I aborted him/her. One day in church, I viewed a film on a local Crisis Pregnancy Center. At first I worried what other Christians would think if they knew what I'd done. Would they reject and condemn me? In the past I'd always thought CPC counselors were pro-life zealots ready to chastise post-abortive women.

The CPC had a booth set up on the church grounds, and I found literature on post-abortion counseling. After getting the therapy I needed, I began volunteering at the CPC, counseling women going through crisis pregnancies.

My abortion changed my life in ways that were very negative and destructive. First, it destroyed a living human being within my womb, which I now know was a blessing from God. Second, my decision hurt my husband, who later told me he wished he had taken a stand and told me to keep our baby. My choice stole the chance for my in-laws to enjoy

their grandson or granddaughter. Because of my decision to abort my child, I never wanted to get pregnant again.

The good news is that I found forgiveness, reconciliation and began the healing process. God gave me the strength to face my choice. A few years after my abortion, I became a Christian and accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. I turned to Him and tearfully asked him to lift the heavy burden from me. He answered my prayer. God's grace and love freed me to confess what I had done, know that He'd forgiven me, and I was able to forgive myself. Because of this renewed hope, I've been able to talk with and console others who have had abortions or are in crises pregnancies. I'm still in the process of healing, and this will probably continue throughout my life. I will always regret my abortion. But God's truth has truly set me free from the shackles of despair, and has given me a sense of peace and joy that knows no limits.

Sincerely,
Angie Autrey