

Will God Forgive Me if I Have an Abortion?

The email read, "I am scheduled for an abortion tomorrow. I am a Baptist follower of God and want to know if I will be forgiven for this."

We were relieved to learn the next day she had taken more time to think. "I did go to my appointment today," she wrote, "but I could not do it. . . . I was in the operating room in the abortion [clinic] and they were about ready to do the procedure, but I just could not bear it, at least at the moment." She requested information about alternatives to abortion in her city, which we were happy to give.

But what about her original question? How would a wise counselor respond to a woman's plan to abort and then seek forgiveness later?

Christians do sin, and God does forgive (1 John 1:9). Countless women testify of finding forgiveness in Christ after an abortion. That doesn't mean, however, that assurances concerning God's mercy and grace should appear to advise or condone a course of action involving willful sin.

First of all, no one should presume that someone who is contemplating murder possesses eternal life (1 John 3:15). The lifestyle that brought the above woman to the brink of abortion caused us to question whether she was indeed a "follower of God" because those who are born of God do not continue in sin (1 John 3:9 and Romans 6:1-2). Such a one should be urged to examine herself, clarify her understanding of the Gospel, and consider the danger she is in (2 Corinthians 13:5).

Aside from presuming upon God's forgiveness, if she persists in her abortion plan she may be presuming upon herself. She should be warned she may not be the same person after her abortion, ready and willing to seek God's grace. Afterward, she may be so overcome by guilt that she turns from God, or so hardened that she doesn't even think to ask for mercy. She may also become so preoccupied with the consequences of her sin that her life spirals viciously downward.

What advice can be given a Christian who is tempted by abortion? First, she should be exhorted to consider her actions in light of God's holiness. Then she should be challenged to turn her thoughts from "Will God forgive me if I abort?" to "How will God help me avoid the sin of abortion?"

Don't 'dis' God

God is completely holy. He cannot ignore sin. His holiness demanded justice and was only satisfied when His perfect Son Jesus died on the cross. Grace and mercy came at a terrible cost. It is, therefore, no joking matter to succumb to the spirit of our age that says, "It's better to ask forgiveness than seek permission." Therefore . . .

- DON'T **DISBELIEVE** GOD by thinking, "God can't or won't help me avoid the sin of abortion."

- DON'T **DISOBEY** GOD by refusing to follow His commands concerning the life of your unborn child.
- DON'T **DISHONOR** GOD by continuing in your plan to sin while bearing His name.

Explore and expect God's goodness

As dark and desperate as a woman's situation may be, she can be encouraged by the story of Hagar in Genesis 16. Hagar grew in her understanding of a gracious God during a difficult pregnancy. God saw her distress, made a plan for her and her baby, and provided for all their needs. A woman tempted by abortion can:

- **THANK GOD** for placing in her heart the conviction that abortion is wrong.
- **TRUST GOD** to reveal the escape from temptation that He has promised to provide. Jesus invites her to come boldly before His Throne in her time of need. His mercy and grace are available to strengthen her for overcoming temptation (Psalm 19:13, 1 Corinthians 10:13, and Hebrews 4:15-16).
- **SEEK GOD'S GUIDANCE** and accept the help of others to discover alternatives to abortion that may have been overlooked.

Abortion is never a solution to problems. If God is great enough to forgive abortion, isn't He also great enough to help women avoid abortion? They can trust Him with their lives and with the lives of their babies.