

# Abortion/ God values every person

**Storyteller:** Annie was crying. She was pregnant again. She already had six children, and the youngest one was only five months old! When this new baby was born, the last baby would only be 1 year old and not even walking yet. Already she was so tired. She never sang any more as she worked around the house or in the field. She was just too tired! And now another baby on the way? She loved her children and she had always thought that abortion was wrong, but now she felt desperate.

**Tammy:** Welcome to *Women of Hope*. I'm Tammy.

**Carol:** And I'm Carol. We're so glad to be with you again today. I wonder if you can understand how Annie was feeling. We like to think that women are delighted about having a baby, but that's not always true, is it? You might feel awful with morning sickness, or have big health problems, and feel that you can't face the 9 months of pregnancy.

**Tammy:** Or you might worry about the cost of caring for an extra child, or that you won't be able to get back to work, or you worry about the pressure another child might put on your marriage.

**Carol:** Let's keep listening to the rest of Annie's story.

**Storyteller:** Hello. Yes, this is a difficult story to tell. Annie thought and thought. She finally decided that she just couldn't manage another baby. She felt torn in two, but she decided she must get rid of this baby quickly before her husband noticed. She knew that he wouldn't agree. He wanted as many children as possible, like many men in their culture.

There was a grandmother in her village who would abort the baby and not tell anyone, and she didn't charge a lot of money. So the first time her husband was away in town, Annie went to see her.

Annie thought that having another baby would be dreadful, but what happened to her that day was far worse! The old woman used a stick to reach inside her and open her cervix, the entrance to the womb, so she could poke at the tiny developing baby and kill it. She said once the baby was dead, Annie's womb, or uterus, would push it out. But the old woman accidentally pushed the stick right through into Annie's insides, tearing things and taking bacteria inside her. The old woman didn't realize what happened and Annie thought that the pain she felt was normal.

Afterwards, she went home and began to have labor pains and bleeding. Later that afternoon, Annie felt very hot. She started vomiting and had terrible pains in her belly. Finally, her oldest child ran to the neighbor to ask for help, and the neighbor quickly took her to the hospital. The hospital staff realized what had happened, even though Annie didn't want to tell them. They immediately started giving her fluids through a tube into her veins, with antibiotics to treat the infection.

But Annie was very, very sick. When her husband came home, the neighbors told him that she was in the hospital. When he saw her condition, he was very upset, but she said weakly, "I just couldn't have another baby! I thought this would be quick. I thought it would be an easy way to solve the problem. I'm so sorry!"

The hospital staff worked hard to save her, but later that night, Annie died. The stick used to kill the baby had damaged her and started a serious infection inside her.

The doctor at the hospital was very upset. 'Not another family left without their mother!' he said. 'I see too many women who can't cope and they try to get rid of the babies any way they can. These people doing the abortions often cause a lot of damage to the women's insides, and they use dirty instruments or even sticks that can cause infections. Many women die this way. If only husbands and wives could talk about it together and agree how many children they could care for properly, and use modern family planning methods! Then women wouldn't even have to think about abortion.'

Annie's husband was very sad that he had lost his wife. He had loved her and would miss her. And he now had 6 small children with no mother to care for them. He knew that what the doctor said was true. After every baby was born, the midwife had advised them to plan their family.

'Why didn't I listen?' he said, with his head in his hands. 'And now it's too late.'

**Carol:** Here on *Women of Hope* we've been hearing about a woman who died after an illegal abortion. This is such a sad story.

**Storyteller:** Yes, and sadly, it's quite a common one in places where people don't use modern methods of birth control.

**Carol:** Yes, in some places abortion is the most common way to avoid having babies, and women have several abortions in their lives. What a tragedy! I feel for those women- and their lost babies.

**Tammy:** According to the World Health Organization, nearly half of all abortions in the world are done by *unqualified* people, or in *unsafe* places that don't meet basic medical standards. Nearly all unsafe abortions- 98%- are in developing countries; and that's mostly because it's harder for women to find safe reliable ways to avoid getting pregnant. Some abortion clinics are *legal* but not *safe*- sometimes they pressure women to abort their babies, or they don't give proper advice or take proper care of them. The women can bleed badly, or get infections like Annie did, or die.

But I have to tell you, abortion is *not* a very safe procedure even when it's done in a hospital.

**Carol:** How could abortion ever be called a *safe* procedure? It's never safe for the *baby* who's being killed. It breaks my heart to think of so many babies lost each day.

**Tammy:** I know! I feel the same way. But today, let's look at the medical dangers for the *mother*.

I read that after an abortion, the cervix, the entrance to the uterus, often becomes inflamed. That might not sound much, but it often leads to Pelvic Inflammatory Disease, which can permanently damage the pelvis. It can also lead to Cervical Cancer later on in life, and that can kill the mother.

Women who have abortions are more likely to have problems with *later* pregnancies. They might find it difficult or impossible to get pregnant later; abortions are one of the main reasons for infertility. These women are more likely to have complicated pregnancies or miscarriages... and they are more likely to have sick or premature babies...or lose their babies. If they have several abortions the risks are *much* greater.

**Carol:** It's not just the risk to a woman's *body* that concerns me. I know that very many women feel a lot of *emotional* distress afterwards.

**Tammy:** Oh yes, of course!

**Storyteller:** A woman naturally feels grief at the loss of her child. Many women become depressed, and often they feel they can't talk about it, because they *chose* to end the pregnancy. But then many women felt they had no choice.

**Tammy:** That's right. Maybe, like Annie, they felt they couldn't possibly cope. Maybe there was pressure to have an abortion from their husbands or other family members or government officials or their society. Maybe they weren't married and it seemed a dreadful disgrace.

**Carol:** What a terrible position to be in! If you're facing something like this, my heart goes out to you, my sister. God understands your situation, and I pray that God will show you how to do the right thing.

**Tammy:** It's not surprising that these women usually feel sad... angry... and resentful... and often guilty as well. That guilt isn't just because some law or religious leader has told them it's wrong. In fact, often they've been told they should limit the size of their families. They've been told that abortion is *ok*. But deep inside, I think we know it isn't *ok* to kill a baby, even in the early stages of development. Women naturally *want* to protect their unborn babies so they usually feel very torn when they think having about an abortion.

**Storyteller:** You never ever get over it. I've heard women talk about the deep sadness and guilt they carry for years afterwards. Several women said that they were not able to recover until they had confessed it to God and received God's forgiveness.

**Tammy:** Yet some people talk about it as an easy way of getting rid of an inconvenient pregnancy. It's not! It's far better to use a reliable modern method to plan your family, so you never get into the terrible position of having to consider an abortion. And if you're facing this decision, please think hard about the dangers. Your life is precious, and so is your baby's life.

**Carol:** Here on *Women of Hope* we've been talking about the dangers to a woman who has an abortion. Maybe you've wondered what God thinks about this- the God who made heaven and earth, and each one of us.

**Tammy:** Have you ever thought, 'I'm not important. I'm not anyone special'? Perhaps you know of people who've become famous, or people who have important jobs. Maybe you think that the people you see on TV or in newspapers are the important people. And it's easy to think we are not important to God. You might think, 'I'm only a tiny speck among the huge number of people in the world.'

**Carol:** I think a lot of us feel unimportant sometimes. Maybe no-one notices what we do. Maybe we think what we do isn't really very important.

**Tammy:** But, do you know what God thinks about us? Yes, we can know what God thinks about us. We have God's holy book, the Bible, to tell us that God thinks we are very important – not just some of us, all of us!

**Carol:** Tammy, why don't you read some of our favorite parts of the Bible that show us how special we are to God?

**Tammy:** Sure. How about sitting down, if you're not already doing that, so you can listen to some beautiful words from God's holy book the Bible. The first one comes from one of the Psalms. These are inspired poems.

'You are the one who put me together  
inside my mother's body,  
and I praise you  
because of  
the wonderful way  
you created me.  
Everything you do is marvelous!  
Of this I have no doubt.  
  
Nothing about me  
is hidden from you!  
I was secretly woven together  
deep in the earth below,  
but with your own eyes  
you saw  
my body being formed.  
Even before I was born,  
you had written in your book  
everything I would do.'

(Psalm 139:13-16,CEV)

**Carol:** Isn't that incredible! And it tells us that God knows us from the moment we are conceived...from the moment we start to exist in our mothers' womb. It says that God is the one who created us, and that he saw our tiny bodies being formed long before we were born. Not only that – he had plans for us that started from when we were still in our mother's womb, at the very beginning of our lives.

**Tammy:** Yes. We don't just start to be important to God when we are born. We are important from the time a sperm and an egg combine to make a fetus - the beginning of a tiny baby. I'll read you another of our favorite parts from the Bible.

Once Jesus was talking to his disciples about not being afraid. He said: "Aren't two sparrows sold for only a penny? But your Father knows when any one of them falls to the ground. Even the hairs on your head are counted. So don't be afraid! You are worth much more than many sparrows." (Matthew 10:29-31, CEV)

**Carol:** Did you hear that? – The Bible says God knows how many hairs are on our heads. I wouldn't know how many hairs are on my head myself! But God knows those tiny details about us. Isn't that just wonderful?

**Tammy:** And it also says that we're worth much more than many sparrows. Jesus was saying that our Father, God, knows when even a common little bird falls down, but we are much more important to him. He cares for us a great deal. We are very important to God, every single one of us.

**Carol:** And just as we're important to God, so is every baby that is conceived – right from the moment he or she starts to exist as a tiny fetus, in the mother's womb. If you are pregnant now, the tiny baby inside you is one of God's special, unique creations.

Listen to this: when God created you, He made you unique. There has never, ever been anyone just like you. Because you are unique, you are special. And this is true for any little baby who is still inside the mother's womb.

**Tammy:** Did you know that every single person in the whole world has a different pattern on the ends of their fingers? God made you with a set of fingerprints that are unique. Nobody else has them - only

you. This is true for the prints on your feet...the palms of your hands and even your voice. You are a unique person with a body that is different from any that has ever been made before.

**Carol:** And it's not just your body that is unique. You were given a mixture of abilities and talents that is not exactly the same as anybody else's. That means you are valuable and important too. Tammy. Read the verse from Genesis, the very first part of the Bible.

**Tammy:** OK. It says: 'So God created humans to be like himself; he made men and women.'  
(Genesis 1:27 27)

This tells us that God made each of us to be very special indeed – to be like himself. Of all the things that God created, only human beings are able to know and love God. This is because we have a spiritual ability, as God has. Only humans can search for God and come to know him, and follow his ways. Only humans are made to live forever with God after their life on earth.

God has given us the ability to choose whether we want to know him and love him or whether we want to just ignore him. And he made a way for us to know and understand him. He allowed his Son, Jesus to be born as a human baby and to live on earth among other people.

**Carol:** You know, I have another favorite part of the Bible. You see Jesus explained what God really wants us humans to do.

A man came up to Jesus and asked him a question about the rules that God gave people in the Old Testament part of the Bible. He asked, "Teacher, what is the most important commandment in the Law?"

Jesus answered: "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.* This is the first and most important commandment. The second most important commandment is like this one. It is, *Love others in the same way as you love yourself.*" All the Law of Moses and the Books of the Prophets are based on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:36-40, CEV)

This explains why God made us like himself. He wants us to love him and to show loving care to other people. And we are able to do both, *because* he made us like himself.

**Tammy:** Yes, we all have the ability to show love and respect and care for others. I said before, that God has given us the choice to love him or not, and to choose how we behave. And, sadly, we all choose to do things that are wrong. We all choose to ignore God and act selfishly at times.

**Carol:** But the good news is that each of us – made by God, and unique and important to God – can be forgiven for our wrong choices and for ignoring God. Jesus came to live on earth as a human and then he died and rose again. He died on our behalf, so that we could have everlasting life after death. But it is *our* choice – we can choose to accept this gift from God or to keep ignoring God.

**Tammy:** Remember, every one of us is very important to God. And our children, our unborn babies are important to God. He values us all very highly, and he wants us to value him and other people highly.

Let's pray together:

*Dear God our Father,*

*Thank you that you knew us from the time we were conceived, and you will know us until the end of our lives, and you love us dearly. Thank you that we are each unique and wonderful, and extremely important to you. Help us to accept your love and make you important in our lives too. Amen*

**Carol:** Well, my unique and precious friend, it's time for us to go. Let's meet again next time.

**Tammy:** We always love to hear from you. You can contact us in care of this station or at Women of Hope. The email address is [TWRWomenofHope@TWR.org](mailto:TWRWomenofHope@TWR.org)

That's [TWRWomenofHope@TWR.org](mailto:TWRWomenofHope@TWR.org) Or if you missed a program or want to hear one again, visit our website at [TWRWomenofHope.org](http://TWRWomenofHope.org). Or visit our Facebook page.

**Carol:** Remember, you and your baby are precious to God. Goodbye now, have a wonderful week filled with God's blessings.

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