

Prescriptions for the Heart

Recovering from Post-abortion Syndrome

Post-abortion Syndrome is a term that describes the emotional and psychological consequences that can result from having an abortion. If you have had an abortion, you are not alone. Statistics say that four out of ten women will have an abortion at some point in their lives. Sometimes women see abortion as the best solution for an unexpected pregnancy. However, after an abortion, a woman can suffer a variety of strong and even self-destructive feelings. Without help, she may find it very difficult to achieve a sense of peace about what has occurred.

One of the problems is that if you have had an abortion, it may be very hard to talk about it – with anyone. Yet without someone in whom you can confide and who can help you grieve this loss, it can be very difficult to resolve the issues. This can produce deep feelings of guilt or remorse, anxiety, and can lead to depression, and even self-destructive behavior.

When these symptoms become problematic and you recognize the need for change, there are several steps that you can take.

The first step is to acknowledge your abortion and all the feelings associated with it. Find someone, whether it be a friend, pastor, or counselor and tell them how you feel. Be as honest and open as you can be, even though this part of the process can be very difficult.

Second, you will need to deal with the guilt and your need for forgiveness. Accept responsibility for your part of the abortion decision. You may feel that there is no way God will forgive you for your decision, but rest assured that God is far more understanding and forgiving than most people can imagine. There is only one sin that is unpardonable, and that is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Your actions do not fit this description, and your remorse and willingness to ask forgiveness definitely show that you very much want to be reconciled with God, not separated from Him.

When Jesus was hanging on the Cross, one of the criminals hanging with him was a murderer. Jesus told this man that, as a result of his faith, he would be with Him in paradise that day. This did not mean that what the person had done was not bad, or that it had not actually resulted in the loss of the life of another human being. It only meant that expressions of true faith result in God's forgiveness. Express your faith in prayer, and ask God to forgive you, and He will surely do so, for the sake of His Son.

Finally, you need to grieve the loss of the child. You never experienced the entire bonding process that most women experience through the months of pregnancy and then by giving birth. Yet you did experience a certain bonding, and that may be contributing to your sense of loss. You may need the help of a skilled counselor in order to be able to forgive yourself, but in time you may be able to lay down the grief and all that goes with it, so you can love that unborn child in the same way that God does.

You will know that you have truly experienced healing when you accept the responsibility, are able to speak openly about it, have accepted God's forgiveness, have forgiven yourself, and have

extended forgiveness to others involved in the abortion decision.

You are not alone either in your action, or how you feel about it. Rest assured that God does love you, and He will help you past all the destructive feelings toward resting in His peace. Your pastor stands with you in this process, and will support you in whatever way you may need his or her help.

This information is provided as a free service of the Christian Medical & Dental Associations and your pastor.

Resources I recommend: _____

Pastor's Signature

Available at your local Christian bookstore or by calling Life and Health Resources at 1-888-231-2637 or by visiting www.shopcmda.org.