

“I Feel So Guilty That My Baby Was Born with a Birth Defect After I Had an Abortion”

I had an abortion when I was young. Several years later I gave birth to a child with a disability. My guilt knows no bounds. I feel God is punishing my child with a life of suffering due to my horrible sin. I think of King David and how God punished his sin by killing his baby. At least his baby died and went to Heaven. My child will live and suffer all the days of their life. I know it's my fault. What can I do?

Thank you from the bottom of my broken heart.

Guilty Mom

I understand your feelings of guilt, but let me gently point out that you have connected the dots between your abortion and your child's disability as if one caused the other. Since the vast majority of post-abortal mothers deliver healthy babies after their abortion, this is not an automatic cause-and-effect relationship. In addition, many babies with disabilities are born to mothers who didn't have abortions.

Secondly, the nature and character of God is that He does not punish innocents for the sins of their mothers. Twice in the Old Testament, God corrects this wrong assumption; here's one:

“What do you mean by using this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, ‘The fathers eat the sour grapes, But the children's teeth are set on edge’?

“As I live,” declares the Lord GOD, “you are surely not going to use this proverb in Israel anymore.

“Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well

as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die.”
(Ezek 18:2-4)

This passage teaches that the consequences of one's sins are borne by the one who sinned, not their children. (Now I will admit that there are effects of a parent's sins on a family, such as angry parents producing fearful children, but that's not the same as God punishing a child for the parent's sin.)

One of the reasons Jesus left heaven to come to earth as one of us, was to show us what the Father is really like. He knew that we would paint the face of His Father out of the paint bucket of misunderstanding and fear that comes from our own warped perception of God. If you read the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15, you'll see the true heart of the Father—and He's not the kind of God who would punish a child for their mother's sin.

This same Father allowed David to experience a deep brokenness from his sin of adultery by taking David's baby home to be with Himself. The God of Luke 15 is the same Father who disciplined His beloved David for his sin. God is not a vindictive, punishing God who takes pleasure in making His children suffer, but He knows what kind of discipline will best produce the beauty of Christlikeness in us.

Yes, your child will live with a disability all the days of their life. But let me assure you, as one who has lived with a disability almost from birth (so I have no memory of being strong and healthy), God has used my disability in mighty and profound ways. It has not been a punishment, even on my worst days; I have even gotten to the point, at age 59, of realizing that my disability is one of His greatest gifts to me. This has become my life verse:

Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal

weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Cor 4:16-18)

It's easy, in our limited way of seeing things, to believe that suffering in any form is evil and to be avoided at all costs. This is not the way things work in the "real" world where Jesus is Lord. Suffering can accomplish very good and important things in our lives that we can't experience any other way. I wrote an article called ["The Value of Suffering"](#) that is one of the best things I've ever written, which you may find helpful.

You ask what you should do.

Your heart is so tender and wounded, there is no doubt that you have confessed your sin over and over, so that part is done. But 1 John 1:9 has another wonderful part to it:

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

You have confessed your sin; because God is good, He has not only forgiven you, He has cleansed you from the stain of your sin. You are clean. It's all over. If you have trusted in Jesus' life, death and resurrection for you, you are a new creature and He is renewing you from the inside out.

So at this point, you can tell God, "Thank You for forgiving me, thank You for cleansing me, thank You for redeeming my sin and turning something evil into something good. Thank You for being bigger than my sins, and being able to turn things around in ways I cannot imagine. With Jesus' help, I receive the assurance that You have forgiven me and will use my child's disability for great and glorious purposes. Help my heart catch up with my head on this. Help me to see that You allowed me to go down that dark path into sin because You are

able to redeem even the worst things we do.”

I pray for you, _____, for the peace that passes understanding (Phil. 4:7) to anoint you like warm oil and soak down deep into your heart.

Warmly,
Sue Bohlin

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