

Olivia, Kayla, Shannon... and Max

Meeting the Needs of Four Students through Outreach

GRACE FONTENOT'S MONTHLY UPDATE



Dear Family and Friends,



JUNE 2017

While most people who attend JFA training events are pro-life, some are still sorting out where they stand on abortion. In a previous newsletter, I mentioned three of the latter sort, Olivia, Kayla, and Shannon, whom I mentored at a high school seminar and outreach event at Colorado State University (CSU).

Three days after mentoring them through the *Abortion: From Debate To Dialogue* seminar, these three ladies approached JFA's outreach to CSU, looking for me to provide some direction. I encouraged them to listen in on JFA staff members' conversations for a little while, and then start engaging pro-choice students in personal dialogue. But as we spoke, it became clear that they still had their own questions. Olivia spoke up, explaining that they were simply not sure if they believed abortion should be illegal in all circumstances, particularly for the case of rape.

Olivia: Biologically, yeah, [the unborn] is human, but I don't know if it has *rights* until a certain point in development.

When she said this, I immediately thought of JFA's training material on the Equal Rights Argument (to learn more

about the Equal Rights argument, visit www.jfaweb.org/Equal-Rights). The Equal Rights Argument is a series of questions that helps people to analyze different explanations for human equality. These questions highlight that the most reasonable basis for equal rights is the common human nature we share from conception, rather than a functional capability we attain as we grow. I delved deeper into this philosophical topic with them, testing over and over again different pro-choice objections to the equality of the unborn. I wanted them to think through each one, so that they could see the problems with them. As we talked, they were realizing for themselves that our equal right to life must be based on our common humanity – something that the unborn shares. It was an interesting dynamic because I had



Mentoring Olivia, Kayla, and Shannon through the Justice For All *Abortion: From Debate to Dialogue* seminar in Arvada, Colorado

mentored them through that section in our seminar just a few days prior. So they knew all of the material, they had already heard it, they were equipped, *but they needed to process it for themselves* before taking it out and talking to someone about it.

In order to respond to her question, I brought up an example related to feminism.

Grace: Our shared humanity *has* to be what explains our equal rights. For instance, we don't deserve equal rights as women because we're *women*, we deserve equal rights because we are *human*.

The feminist movement rests on the recognition that we – women and men – deserve equal rights because we are *equally human*. If we, as women, claim that someone who is equally human to us [the unborn] *does not* have equal rights to us, then we are attacking the very foundation that our rights are based on, effectively pulling the rug out from under our own feet.



This line of reasoning made a huge difference for these young ladies. At that point, they expressed solid pro-life conviction. They were really confident and ready to go out and have conversations. They walked a few feet away to our “Should abortion remain legal?” poll table to listen in on conversations involving other JFA staff. But before they got too far, a CSU student named Max caught their attention when he approached me and said:

Max: Abortion is fine. I don’t really care, because it’s *not a person* – not a human with rights.



Talking to Max in front of our *Stop and Think* Exhibit on April 25, 2017

What a coincidence! Max had raised the very same objection that I had just been discussing with Olivia, Kayla, and Shannon.

After making sure we had common ground in the belief that the unborn is at least biologically human, we moved on to the question of when the unborn becomes a human with rights.

Max and I talked through everything that the ladies and I had just finished discussing while they *listened in and heard the whole conversation*. **What an incredible teaching moment.**

So these three students – whom I had mentored, to whom I had taught the Equal Rights Argument, and who had become solidly pro-life only moments

before – had the opportunity to watch the reasoning they'd just learned in action in my conversation with Max. They heard me explain the argument to him and they watched him follow its logic. They even listened as he repeatedly adjusted his view, trying to come up with new explanations for human equality that could justify abortion after realizing that his previous attempts had failed.

The conversation ended when Max had to leave for class. The students, who were standing just within earshot then walked back over and said:

Olivia, Kayla, and Shannon: That was an amazing conversation! You did everything you just taught us how to do! That’s so cool!

They were so excited. It was such an interesting learning moment and a testament to the effectiveness of JFA’s ministry. What amazing things our God can do!

In a very short amount of time, I had the opportunity to minister to four students who all had similar objections to the pro-life position. Three of them were mostly pro-life but were struggling with doubts; the other was trying to hold on to his pro-choice beliefs despite the evidence against them. This experience was formative for the students I'd mentored, who were not only equipped for dialogue by talking with me, but also by witnessing my conversation with Max. JFA's training model made this unique experience possible. JFA gives students so much more than information. We give them time to practically apply what they are learning and see if it works. For Olivia, Kayla, and Shannon, the outreach portion of their training was critical for them to truly own their pro-life stance.

None of this would be possible without supporters like you. Thank you for partnering with me financially, so that I can help students to think more clearly about abortion. If you have not yet joined my support team, please consider a monthly gift; your support doesn't help just me, but has a ripple effect for others like Olivia, Kayla, Shannon, and Max.

For the sake of His sorrowful passion,