



When Twila Opened Her Heart



Tammy Cook's Monthly Update

June 2019

I saw the movie *Unplanned* in late March. The movie shows the often hidden truth about abortion. It has helped get more people talking about abortion, which is always good! I will share a good story about the movie in a moment, but first let's look at some basic Pro-Life 101 to ensure we're focusing on the most important things in our conversations about abortion.

Here are some key questions that we can ask ourselves about our interactions. *Am I having productive conversations, or am I having arguments? What kind of impact am I having in my conversations? Good or bad? Am I representing Christ well? Am I seeking to understand the other person's view? Am I seeking common ground? Am I giving this person an accurate view of who Jesus is by my words and actions? Am I trying to understand this person's pain and anger? Could her pain be from a past abortion or a wounded heart from some other emotional life experience?*

Let's genuinely listen to one another and not make assumptions about what someone believes. If we win the argument but we ignore caring for the person, have we truly succeeded? We shouldn't shy away from truth, but instead balance truth with a big dose of love and compassion to open the door to someone's heart. Our conversations can change significantly when we're winsome instead of adversarial.

Since I was privileged to see the movie *Unplanned* for free, I decided to look for opportunities to give away movie tickets to others who might have a different view on abortion than mine.

The timing was perfect. Justice For All had scheduled events in Lawrence, Kansas the same week that the movie opened in theatres. Our campus outreach was scheduled for April 1 and 2 at the University of Kansas (KU). I prayed that during the outreach I would have at least one conversation with a student who was willing to see the movie with a friend. I bought movie tickets and waited for God to answer my prayer.



Tammy talking with a KU student

My first conversation on Monday was with a student named Twila.* One of our volunteers, Pauline, was also part of the conversation. Twila was very friendly and easygoing. She said she was pro-choice. We asked questions to learn more about her view. She stated that she used to be very pro-choice, but recently her view had been evolving because she had been listening to a radio host that is a libertarian and pro-life. It had caused her to re-examine her own views. But she told us she's still pro-choice. We spoke for about twenty minutes. She told us she's a political science major and enjoys conversations on topics like abortion. She liked our thought-provoking questions.

* Name has been changed to protect her privacy.

She seemed very open to different perspectives on this issue. I asked if she had heard of the movie *Unplanned* and she said, “No.” I told her about the movie and asked if she would have time to see it on Tuesday with a friend if I gave her two free tickets. She said, “Yes,” and appeared genuinely interested in learning more about the pro-life perspective. I asked if she would be willing to give me her honest review of the movie and she agreed. We exchanged contact information.

On Tuesday evening, I received a short text from her. “Hi Tammy! I just got out of the movie. Thank you for giving me the tickets.”

I texted Twila a day later and asked her a few questions. Here is her response:

It was incredibly emotional! I've given the topic serious thought, and I've become increasingly pro-life due to my own research, but this movie really took it to a new level. If you're asking where I now stand on abortion, if I'm honest, I would say I really only agree with it in cases of rape or incest (outside of life-threatening situations). I agree that human life has been objectified too often in utero in more ways than I had thought previously. I think the topic still deserves more discussion and I'm sure my views will continue to adapt, but this movie did help it to adapt. As for Planned Parenthood, I thought it was incredibly insightful and revealed flaws in the organization. I myself have seen allusions to these flaws; I know they are pushing in some states and have allowed in some states to allow nurse practitioners to perform surgical abortions instead of surgeons, and to me this is a symptom of them pushing to sell abortions. Also, on their website, they warn not to visit clinics that are Christian based because they warn that they pressure clients. I myself have visited one of these Christian clinics for health reasons, and my experience there was like Abby's when she quit Planned Parenthood: no judgment, no coercion. Just genuine support. So it changes my views toward Planned Parenthood as well ... I did bring my friend to the movie, and I believe she had a similar reaction to me. I'm not comfortable putting her experience in writing, but I will admit that it was [as] emotional for her as it was for me.

Twila had a strong pro-choice background, but nevertheless, she had decided to open her heart to another perspective by listening to the radio show. And then at the KU outreach, she was open-minded during the conversation with me and Pauline. The movie solidified her newfound information. This shows that conversations with those who disagree with us are important, but they are only part of the equation. I believe that God is the one who opened Twila's heart and is continuing to work in her life. So, let's pray for more open hearts like Twila's.

I have stayed in touch with Twila and we plan to meet again to continue our conversation. Please continue to pray for her. It would be wonderful to see her become 100% pro-life and even better to see her join the KU Students For Life club someday!

Thank you for your investment in helping to make conversations like this one take place. I'm grateful for your support. May God bless you.

In Christ,



Tammy Cook