



Bearing Unexpected Fruit

- A Conversation at Purdue University -



Tammy Cook's Monthly Update

July 2018

Jack came across our *Stop and Think* Exhibit as he walked to class at Purdue University in the fall of 2017. He approached me and started yelling about why he hates pro-lifers. He asked several questions, but he didn't wait for answers. He didn't want to hear my answers. He had already judged that I was like every other pro-lifer he had met and that anything I had to say wasn't worth hearing. He turned to leave. I knew that I needed more time with him, but how? Before I knew it, I blurted out, "Wait! I have a question for you." He turned back around and looked at me, waiting to hear what I had to say. Finally.

I said, "My name is Tammy. Even though we may have differing opinions on this subject, I would be eager to understand more about your view and have a respectful dialogue with you. It sounds like you think abortion should stay legal, is that right?"

Jack said, "Yes." I continued to ask questions and find common ground with Jack. Within ten minutes, his whole demeanor had changed. He slowly opened up as I displayed genuine concern about his opinion. I asked if he had always been pro-choice. He said no. He had gone to Catholic schools from second grade through high school. He had even gone to the March for Life twice in high school. In high school he started questioning certain aspects of his Catholic faith and finally decided that he didn't believe in God anymore. He is now agnostic and Buddhist.



Tammy talking with Jack at Purdue University

By the end of our conversation, Jack didn't change his mind about abortion or God, but that's not JFA's only goal. It was a small victory just to have engaged Jack in conversation. I listened to him. I asked him challenging questions in a loving manner — in such a way that he felt heard and respected. I found common ground with him, which helped keep the conversation going. And at the end of our thirty-minute conversation, here's what Jack said: "I didn't change my mind on abortion, but I have gained a new respect for views that other people hold. I wish more people would have respectful conversations like this one." Wow. Remember the beginning of our conversation? Jack was yelling at me! And yet by the end, he was thanking me for being able to have a respectful conversation.

Thank you for your support. I hope that these monthly reports are not only an encouragement to you, but also give you concrete examples of how you can have an impact through your own conversations. And please pray for Jack—that God will water the seeds that I planted, and that God will bear fruit beyond our wildest dreams. Because, well, God truly *can* accomplish incredible things.

In Christ,

Tammy Cook