



# Invisible Pain

- How Abortion Affects Men -



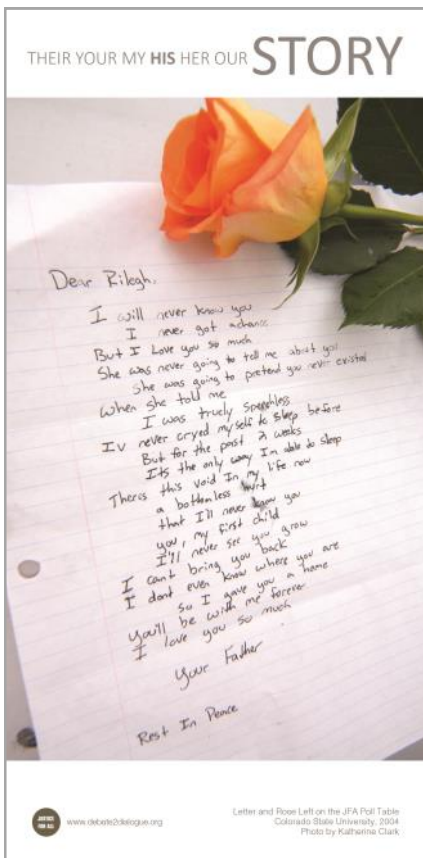
Tammy Cook's Monthly Update

January 2018

Abortion has now been legal in all fifty states for forty-five years. The legal decisions of Roe vs. Wade and Doe vs. Bolton have had a catastrophic impact on our country. Millions of babies have lost their lives to abortion. Furthermore, millions of men and women are living with deep emotional scars from their abortion experiences. There are many programs available to help women process their grief and walk through the healing process, but there are fewer programs for men. We often don't hear about the pain that a man suffers when his child is aborted, many times against his will. So this month I am sharing the stories of "John" (2004) and "Daniel" (2017).

We met a student named John in 2004 when we displayed the original Justice For All (JFA) Exhibit at Colorado State University (CSU). John and his high school sweetheart had made a pact that they would not get an abortion if they ever got pregnant. But just two weeks before we met him, he had received devastating news from his girlfriend. He learned that she had broken their pact and had aborted their child.

On the same day that we met John, we came across the letter below on one of our tables. We aren't certain, but we strongly suspect that the letter was written and left by John along with the yellow rose.



(Left) Letter and rose left on the JFA Poll Table at Colorado State University in 2004. This story is now featured on JFA's *Stop and Think Exhibit*. This exhibit was first displayed at Colorado State University in 2016 in approximately the same location where the note was originally left on the JFA poll table in 2004.

(Right) - This is the text of the letter as written by John.

Dear Rilegh,  
I will never know you  
I never got a chance  
But I love you so much  
She was never going to tell me about you  
She was going to pretend you never existed  
When she told me  
I was truly speechless  
I've never cryed [sic] myself to sleep before  
But for the past 2 weeks  
It's the only way I'm able to sleep  
There's this void in my life now  
A bottomless hurt  
That I'll never know you  
You, my first child  
I'll never see you grow  
I can't bring you back  
I don't even know where you are  
So I gave you a home [in my heart]  
You'll be with me forever  
I love you so much  
Your Father  
Rest In Peace

Fast forward to April 2017. JFA was at Colorado State University with our *Stop and Think Exhibit*. A student named Daniel stopped to sign "Yes" to our poll question, "Should Abortion Remain Legal?" I asked him if he was willing to explain more about his view and he responded by saying, "I don't understand why people are

fighting against abortion because it only affects 1% of our population. Your money would be better spent fighting things like homelessness and poverty. Did you know that 27% of college students are sexually assaulted every year? You should be doing something to reduce those numbers instead.” I agreed that we can all do more to help others, especially those in great need. I also agreed that sexual assault is horrific, and said that we need to do more to prevent it — and hold the people accountable who commit those crimes.

I was able to show Daniel that I was genuinely listening by finding immediate common ground with him. Instead of attempting to dispute his statistics, I focused on *his* concerns. I believe that by doing that, it allowed me to have a potentially life-changing conversation with him.

We continued talking and I asked if he knew that by the time a woman has finished her childbearing years, typically in her 40’s, that about one in four women has had an abortion. This means that abortion affects 25% of women. Daniel said that he didn’t realize that it affected that many people, so I offered our fact sheet. He took it and said he would like to do more research.



Tammy talking with a CSU student (not Daniel)

I steered the conversation to the topic of the humanity of an unborn baby. I asked, “Since the unborn are human like us, shouldn’t we strive to treat them humanely in the same way that we treat *born* human beings?” Daniel said that women will get abortions even if it’s made illegal. I said, “Yes, I agree that some women will still find a way to get an abortion. I also believe that women are stronger than they realize, and if abortion isn’t an immediate option, they will search and find a healthier solution because they can be quite resourceful.”




The JFA Stop and Think Exhibit at CSU

Then I had a lightbulb moment (thanks to the Holy Spirit). Just ten steps away was the 12-foot panel (as pictured on the left) that displayed John’s story and the letter he wrote to Rileigh. I said, “Daniel, there’s a story that I want you to read — it will only take a minute.” He read it and then stood there in silence. He finally turned to me and said, “That’s powerful. My girlfriend and I both go to CSU and we are high school sweethearts. We’ve had the same kind of conversation that John and his girlfriend had prior to their abortion. We had a pregnancy scare at one time, too.” I said, “Daniel, I want to speak to your heart for a minute. You can be a protector of your future children

by taking steps to prevent the same thing from happening to you that happened to John. Please have a conversation about this story with your girlfriend and consider refraining from sexual intimacy until you get married.” He nodded affirmatively and said, “Thank you for expanding my horizons today.”

Daniel appeared to be rethinking his views on abortion. I am hopeful that my conversation with him along with John’s story will help prevent him from experiencing the same grief that John did. Please pray for all those who have experienced abortion.

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.

In Christ,  
  
Tammy Cook

To view the full JFA Stop and Think Exhibit, go to <http://www.jfaweb.org/exhibits/stop-and-think>