
I Ran And Hid, But I Could Not Escape! A continuation of the author's story

Again, this section builds upon the author's initial story. Volunteers are encouraged to read this piece aloud. Alternatively, play Week 3 of the corresponding CD on which you will hear this section, as read by the author.

After the abortion, I resolved to start over.

I'll put everything behind me. I'll make sure that no one knows of my choices. And, above all, I will be the best person that I can possibly be. That way, no one will ever need to know of the choices that I have made. So began my quest for respect, assurance of value, and freedom from the memories and resultant feelings created by my regrettable choices.

Throughout the following years, I lived my new life. I graduated from high school in January, a semester early. I finished college in three and a half years. I got a good job as an engineer with a major computer company. I tried to do everything that was expected of me.

I was living within expectations, but I wasn't satisfied. I needed something more. I didn't understand my problem, exactly, so I concluded that I had to do more with my life. I concluded that I needed to expand my career options.

After three years working as an engineer, I left my job and went on to law school. There I met Wayne. He was my knight-in-shining-armor, my prince charming. We got married while I was still in law school. What a comfortable, loving feeling. I was married. He loved me. I was part of a couple, a twosome, and a marital partnership. I was living a respectable life, and it felt good.

Even with all these good things in my life, I still felt driven to gain more approval from others. It seemed like I needed constant reassurances that I was doing the right thing. I thrived on positive feedback, working harder and harder to gain the next positive fix. However, each positive fix lasted only a short while, until something rather unidentifiable would again weigh heavily on my heart.

I found myself fretting over whether I said the right thing or whether I had the right clothing or whether I'd be liked. My sense of worth seemed to depend on the opinions of others. I needed to know that they (whoever "they" might have been) approved of me or of what I was doing. I needed their signs of approval. Such signs told me that I wasn't a bad person, that I was ok. Their signs of approval helped me to believe that I was and could be a respectable and likeable person.

Upon graduation from law school, I found a great job with a major corporation. I worked hard to do well, thriving again on all signs of approval, such as job promotions, pay increases, and respect from my colleagues. I loved the regular assurances that I was a valued employee. I had value.

Or did I? Again, something kept telling my heart that I wasn't quite good enough.

I had good friends, a husband, and a good job. I was living the American dream; but what was wrong? I still felt something wasn't right. I wasn't content. True contentedness seemed to evade me. I continued to feel like I had to be careful. *Watch what you say*, I'd tell myself. *Don't do anything wrong. Be sure you are dressed right. Always be careful about what you say or do. Above all, hide your past choices, and do not tell anyone of your secret loss.* Whether I recognized it or not, nothing could eliminate the deep down consequences for my heart that had resulted from my abortion.

CALL OUT

*You are my hiding place;
you will protect me from trouble
and surround me with songs of deliverance.*

Psalm 32:7

For many years, I carefully hid my abortion from everyone. My husband Wayne was the only one that I confided in. I told him about it shortly after he asked me to marry him. I was so afraid that he would no longer want to marry me. I thought for sure I'd lose him; but I also believed that we could not start our marriage with my past choices held in secret. When I finally got up the courage to say the words, I couldn't look at him. I could only look away. I told him that I would understand if he did not want to marry me anymore. Then I saw a glimpse of what true love was all about. Wayne showed me compassion. He still loved me.

It was good to have finally told someone. There was a burden lifted. I thought that I could finally put my regrettable choices behind me. I wanted to believe that the abortion no longer mattered. I wanted to forget about it. I wanted to move on with my life. But it didn't work that way. I could never forget. There were reminders everywhere.

At doctors' offices, the registration forms often asked, "How many pregnancies have you had?" Every time I struggled with the answer. I decided I'd tell them only if they really needed to know. I was there for a headache. They didn't need to know. I was there for an annual check-up. They didn't need to know. I was there for an illness. They

didn't need to know. I was there because I was pregnant. Maybe they needed to know. No, on second thought, they didn't need to know. *Hide it*, I thought as I lied on the forms.

Then, there were the times that abortion came up as the topic of conversation with friends or family members. Usually something in the news would cause someone to start the conversation. "It should be against the law," someone would say. "It's wrong! How can anyone even think about killing their baby like that?" another would add with greater intensity and disgust.

Hide it, I'd remind myself. *They will never understand*. I had no options but to hide my choices, hide my guilt, and hide my shame. I had to live with my past choices in silence. There was no escape.

Then came the time when my daughters came home from their church youth group armed with pro-life, anti-abortion materials. They asked rhetorically and with a tone of disgust, "How could anyone do that?"

My heart sank. *Hide it*, I cried to myself.

No matter how hard I tried to hide it, it would not go away. My choice was part of my regrettable past, and I could not escape my feelings of guilt. Yet I could not tell anyone. The things that I feared most, loss of the love of family or friends, made it too risky to tell anyone. Nothing I did removed the guilt. Nothing I did enabled me to forget my choices. My choices and their consequences never went away.

I ran and I hid, but I couldn't escape.

CALL OUT

He who conceals his sins does not prosper,

but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

Proverbs 28:13

Copyright © 2005 by Sheila M. Luck

All scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are from the Life Application Study Bible, New International Version®, co-published by Tyndale House Publisher, Inc., Wheaton IL, and Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, Copyright © 1988, 1989, 1990 and 1991. The Bible text used in this edition of the Life Application Study Bible is the Holy Bible, New International Version®, copyright 1973, 1978, and 1984 by International Bible Society.