

A Letter from Jane

THE BRIDGE OF FRIENDSHIP

Dear Linda,

I am writing you because we have been friends for so long. We grew up together in similar Christian families. We went through catechism classes and were confirmed together. You were a bridesmaid in my wedding and I in yours.

But it hasn't been easy, has it? We've both been deceived by the ideas of this world. Repeatedly, Satan has come to us with the same question he asked Eve, "Did God really say...?" Did God really say that He would provide all that you need? Did God really say that you can't trust your own feelings? Did God really say that it's wrong to be intimate with someone who is not your husband?

We each chose different paths in life. You stayed closer to home and, therefore, had the benefit of parents, relatives, and church family who held you accountable. You married a Christian man. I know you've had your own struggles, but do you know how badly I wanted the kind of encouragement you seemed to have?

I married a man who was older. Sophisticated. Exciting. He was a good man, but because he wasn't a Christian, he couldn't encourage me with God's Word. To further his education, we moved far away from my parents and church family. Without biblical mentors, it was easy for me to follow my heart and listen to the voices of the world.

After my daughter was born, I remember thinking I wanted to be the kind of mom my mother was. But thinking others more capable than me, I decided on professional childcare and took up a vocation outside the home. I was a capable businesswoman! There were pleasant rewards. But I longed to be home. To be a wife and mom. In my discontent and unsettledness, I fell into the arms of another man... and became pregnant. I could hear the question, "Did God really say...?" Did God really say you shouldn't have an abortion?"

And so, I did. I aborted my second child. But, Linda, I couldn't tell you. Yes, you knew about my divorce, but how could I tell you that besides failing in my marriage I had also failed to be a godly mom?

Sometime later, when I learned that you were involved with the pro-life movement, I became very angry. I didn't want anything to do with you. You were not the kind of reminder I thought I needed. You must have been very confused when one of my feminist friends wrote you a very nasty letter on my behalf. But you pursued me anyway! Your casual, "thinking of you" cards could have been annoying but were, instead, strangely comforting.

There I was, being cold and distant—keeping a very dark secret from you—when my dad died. And there, during the days afterward, were you and your mother—supporting my mom with your loving presence and involvement. Every now and then, another of your kind notes arrived in my mail.

Linda, do you know how you nurtured our friendship? You didn't burn any bridges! You didn't give any ultimatums, nor did you throw up your hands in despair.

Were you surprised when I called to tell you the news? That I was getting married again? That God had brought a Christian man into my life? Were you surprised when I asked you to be present at our wedding?

I don't know what I expected to happen when I was nudged to tell you about my abortion. You listened. And the bridge of our friendship not only stayed intact, it became stronger. We have shared much honesty in recent years, and I am grateful.

When I asked you to please share my story with other women, you said you would. But you explained that you could do that only by using an anonymous name. "I can't use your real name," you told me, "because your daughter doesn't know your secret." I knew in my heart what you were saying. It just wouldn't be right for her to accidentally learn about my abortion from someone else.

For a long time, I thought about that. And it frightened me. My daughter and I had grown so close. We shared such a blessed relationship. I did not want to risk losing her love and respect. Linda, you were there with us on the day of her wedding. Could you see how precious she is to me?

Time has passed. You and I are both grandmothers now. Life continues to be difficult in this fallen world, but there are many joys. I thank God for my family. I pray for them daily. Sometimes during my quiet times, I remember that you are telling my story, but not using my real name. Perhaps it's time that I do something about that.

"God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin ... If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:5b-7, 9).

"So we have come to know and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him ... There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear" (4:16, 18).

I am clinging to that love,

Jane

TALKING POINTS

What are some ways that we attempt to deal with sin and its consequences in our lives? How did David attempt to deal with the sin of adultery in 2 Samuel 11:1-12:15?

Life is hard in this fallen and sinful world. The Christian life is one of repentance as we consider our obedience to God and responsibilities to our neighbors. God asks us to repent whenever we do wrong in any of our stations of life or vocations of daughter, wife, mother, friend, worker, etc. We don't have to despair because we have assurance of mercy and forgiveness in Jesus Christ. **How did a life of repentance change things for the woman in Luke 7:36-50? How does such a life change things for us as we consider relationships with friends, our spouse, or our children?**

Re-read the Scripture verses from 1 John at the conclusion of Jane's letter. She was motivated by God's Word to do something she had put off for a very long time. Now, listen to the Podcast that accompanies Jane's Letter on the Titus 2 for Life website (see the "Stories & Letters" page). **What did Jane do? Why did it matter to both Jane and her daughter?**

While it isn't necessary that we confess every sin from our past with a loved one, it is necessary that we confess them to God. **What happens when we do? Read what happened to David in Psalm 32:1-5. What does 1 John 1:8-9 tell us?**