

About 3 1/2 years ago I was immersed in Lifegate, myself and my 2 oldest children had been baptized, we were involved in Lifekids and I was a Lifegroup leader and host. God was doing miraculous things in my life as I became more obedient through tithing, stopping smoking, starting to change the voices I was listening to and people I was allowing in my life. But I had a secret, I was still involved with a man that God had told me repeatedly that I was to end things with. I was willfully disobedient. January 3rd 2014 I found out I was pregnant and for the next few days I was numb.

I went to church that Sunday and most of it was a blur until one moment when everyone seemed to disappear but Pastor Chad and he looked at me and quoted Deuteronomy 30:19 - Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live!

It doesn't get much plainer than that. I told the father that I was expecting and he demanded that I get an abortion and told me that if I decided to keep the baby that he would have nothing to do with either of us. I told some other trusted people in my life and they also counseled me to terminate the pregnancy even going so far as to say that I would be ruining my other children's lives if I chose to keep the baby. I felt entirely alone and abandoned and more than anything ashamed. Ashamed of my weakness, my disobedience. I was in a position of leadership and an example to my children. How could I face everyone and do this alone?

What followed was one of the hardest weeks of my life. I was engaged in a battle and I knew it wasn't just for this baby but for my future. I had an abortion when I was younger and I knew everything that went along with it. I also knew that I had committed my life to Christ and He was calling me to trust Him in this situation. During this time Amber Benson and Theresa Boydston were praying for me, calling me, coming out to my car to hug me against my will. Lol. Over and over they reminded me that I was not alone.

Life and death. Blessings and curses. I chose life and blessings and God delivered abundantly. My Lifegroup surrounded me with love and support without judgement. I was shown such grace and mercy by my church family. It was because of this that I could celebrate my daughter for the gift and blessing that she is. She is my Joy.

Joy doesn't have the benefit of a father or her father's side of the family but she has been greatly and richly blessed with a church family who has prayed for her and cherished her. I have jokingly referred to her as a "Lifegate baby" but I want you to truly understand what that means. Joy Rose is on this earth now because of the truth that Pastor Chad spoke that day in January. She is here because of the depth of compassion that my precious Lifegate ladies had for me in my time of guilt and shame and fear. I didn't collapse under the weight of the responsibility of raising two children and a brand new baby alone because people who loved me and loved the Lord shared my burden. God spoke through the people at Lifegate.

This testimony isn't about the one time God did something amazing through Lifegate. This testimony is about how every Sunday when I walk in and wave at Pastor Chad I know that he is praying for me and mine, that Joy is being taught just how much Jesus loves her in Tyke Town, that Nik and Lili are being mentored and loved at youth on Wednesdays, that I can worship and be entirely vulnerable with the magnificent women of Lifegate ladies, and that I can live a real and authentic life with my fantastic Lifegroup. That is the miracle. God hasn't stopped working. He has used the ministries and people of Lifegate to demonstrate His love for me and my family. My life today is virtually unrecognizable when compared to what it was a few short years ago and I will never stop praising God for that.

-Darla McKnight