

Pregnant, Alone, **AFRAID?**

“Just two weeks earlier I went for a physical and came away shocked by the news, ‘April, you’re pregnant,’ my doctor said. I couldn’t believe it. Shocked, elated, shocked, depressed, shocked, elated—feeling relieved of the guilt I’d been carrying around for the last 10 months.

In 2012, multiple specialists “confirmed” that complications from my recent abortion had rendered me unable to conceive again—a thought I shamefully pushed into the depths of my soul but carried with me every day. It looked like God had finally forgiven me for my abortion and gifted me with a chance to be a mother... again!”

The happy feeling didn’t last long.

Jim, the baby’s father, quickly brought me back to reality when he reminded me of the past few months—how we’d been couch-hopping with friends and living out of his car. And how little money or food we actually had. ‘*That won’t work,*’ he said, ‘*if we expect this baby to be born healthy.*’

God created rainbows to remind us of His glory and His provision—He sends signs. The blue sign that appeared outside my rain-soaked passenger-side window was, literally, one of those signs. It seemed to have appeared out of nowhere just as I’d finished a silent prayer asking, ‘*Lord, how am I going to do this?*’ **Jim immediately made a neck-snapping u-turn toward the church parking lot we’d just passed—and the sign that stated, *PREGNANT, ALONE, AFRAID? Call 800-ANGEL-OK.*** That sign was as random as our lives and as random

as the road we were driving on. Lost, and not really knowing where we were headed. But the fact remained, I WAS pregnant, essentially alone, and very AFRAID!

The voice on the other end of the help line immediately offered kind words. I began sobbing as Catherine, *Gabriel Network’s* Client Care Coordinator, described how the organization would be able to help me, Jim and our baby... *Gabriel Network* would be able to help us through what we thought was an impossible situation. I was reminded of the verse from Mark 10, ‘*nothing is impossible with God.*’

Catherine was patient as she asked questions and tried to put together the pieces to understand my troubled life. Catherine also gave me the reassurance that my baby was not an accident, or a mishap, but a gift from God—a gift to be cherished.

Soon after the call, I was moving into one of the *Gabriel Network* maternity homes. I was surprised at how welcoming the other moms were... how comfortable they and the staff made me feel.

The unique thing about Gabriel Network is the importance the organization’s programs place on spirituality. ‘*A deep relationship with Christ would make all the difference,*’ Angie, the



turn over to continue...

house director said. How could these people be so happy and have so much energy for seemingly no reason at all? After all, they were as impoverished and, at least I thought, as hopeless as I was. She, and the other women and staff, reflected His Spirit daily. From their example I learned that a relationship with Christ really DID make all the difference... that it went far deeper than calling oneself a 'Christian...' that prayer was important and that it made a big difference on the days I chose to practice it.

A few weeks into the program, my health improved, my spirits had uplifted and I had a growing sense of hope—but I began bleeding. Alarmed, Angie sped me off to the hospital where I was given the grave news that my pregnancy would terminate within days through a miscarriage. All the emotions I felt when I had my abortion came flooding back. I was certain that this was God's way of punishing me. How cruel He is, I thought? Having seen the ultrasounds. Having heard the heartbeat. Now knowing that the joy was about to end. I realized I had fallen in love with this baby and cried myself to sleep convinced I was deserving of His punishment.

Angie repeatedly told me that she, the rest of the *Gabriel Network* staff, and the other moms, were diligently praying for me and my baby. But I just wanted to get this ordeal over with. After all, I'd soon be alone, unemployed and homeless, again!

Bleeding for a second time, Angie ushered me back to the hospital. '*The bleeding,*' the ER doc said, '*was coming from the cervix and had nothing to do with the welfare of the baby.*' In fact, that day's sonogram showed my baby's fingers and toes, and its heartbeat sounded like

racehorses. The doctor reassured me I was headed for a normal—but most likely painful—full-term delivery. That night I cried myself to sleep again, but this time with tears of joy, not remorse. God had not punished me after all. I prayed once again and asked for His forgiveness for having doubted His love for me.

With the help of the housing staff and many *Gabriel Network* volunteers, I received the practical, emotional and spiritual support I so desperately needed. Most importantly, I discovered a life with Christ.

One year later, I recognize the impact *Gabriel Network* had on my life by sending '*a multitude of angels*' to care for me, Jim, and our beautiful baby girl, Elise. Elise is a daily reminder of the beauty of life and the blessings shed upon us each day by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We are back in Florida and I am completing my degree in nursing. I am still dealing with my difficult family, but this time, I carry with me the prayers, education and encouragement I received from *Gabriel Network*.

I am so grateful to *Gabriel Network* donors, staff and volunteers. Their selflessness has made me want to give back and, perhaps, become a *Gabriel Network* volunteer myself, so in the future, I can help others in whatever way possible. *Gabriel Network* was everything I could have asked for. It was not only an answer to my cries, but it will continue to be a vital resource to many other women who may face a crisis-pregnancy.

I can't thank you enough,

April