



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: All Life is Sacred

Guest(s): Christene Jackman and Cort Langeland

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- Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk, a listener-supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.
- Roger Marsh: Hello and welcome to today's edition of Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. We are dedicated to protecting and defending life from cradle to grave. In fact, it is clearly written and defined in our mission statement. That's why we have made the month of January, Sanctity of Human Life Month here at the JDFI. Go online to drjamesdobson.org to check out what we have going on. And while you're there, you can also request your copy of our special "Standing Strong for Life" three-track CD. You'll hear interviews with pro-life leaders, Kristan Hawkins, and Robert and Carlotta Jackson, and you'll be encouraged in the fight for life. Visit drjamesdobson.org/standforlife. That's drjamesdobson.org/standforlife. Now today on Family Talk, we are sharing a heartbreaking, yet redemptive story of abortion, repentance, and God's grace. Here to introduce his guest is JDFI founder, Dr. James Dobson.
- Dr. James Dobson: Today's program will attempt to shed more light on the evils of abortion and the tremendous guilt it caused the women who have been through it. Our guests on this episode of Family Talk are Ms. Chris Jackman and Mr. Cort Langeland. Chris will share the tragic story of her upbringing and why she decided to abort her second child. She'll talk about the shame she felt after having that procedure and the remorse she still carries from that decision. Cort, who was Chris's music teacher, will join the conversation and talk about his pro-life journey and how he helped Chris produce a song entitled, *The Choice*, the choice to help other mothers in this moment of crisis. Let's listen now to this compelling testimony on this edition of Family Talk.
- Folks, it's good to have you here.
- Cort Langeland: Thank you. It's great to be here.
- Christene Jackman: Thank you for having us.
- Dr. James Dobson: You feel just as strongly as we do about that matter of the unborn child.

Christene Jackman: Oh, without a doubt.

Dr. James Dobson: Chris, I'm going to start the program today by going back to your childhood, because there's a story there that our listeners really need to hear, and it's going to be very relevant to many women who are tuned into us today. And I'd like to take you right back to those early days. I know it's rather difficult. When I told you in my office earlier, that that's what I wanted to talk about, to begin with you flinched a little bit. That's kind of a painful memory for you, isn't it? Tell me why your childhood was painful.

Christene Jackman: My father, who I loved dearly was an alcoholic. And I grew up in a home where my family hid the secret, which they often did back then. And some of my earliest memories are ones of fear. It's like fear seems to be one of the most prevailing emotions that I remember.

Dr. James Dobson: Now, did your father ever abuse you physically?

Christene Jackman: No. He never physically abused the girls in the family. There's six of us in the family.

Dr. James Dobson: But the boys?

Christene Jackman: He would get physically abusive with the boys, and it's very scary. I mean, your dad looks really huge to you when you're just a little kid and it was like, he's this hardworking man, one minute and he comes home and he's this totally different creature.

Dr. James Dobson: How'd you feel about yourself at that time? How did you interpret, Chris, in the context of your family?

Christene Jackman: Honestly, I didn't feel like I fit in. In fact, I remember at one point leaving a note for my mother in her dresser that I knew she'd find that said, "I know I'm adopted, just send back where you got me from." And I remember her finding that note and they brought it out at the supper table and read it. And of course, to them, it was a huge joke because I looked so much like my mother. But they all laughed, and I remember thinking, "This isn't funny, you guys. I really feel like this. I feel like I don't fit into my family.

Dr. James Dobson: How much of that was related it to either rejection or a lack of love by your father?

Christene Jackman: A lot. I never really felt close to my dad. He was pretty distant. I was close to my mom, but my dad, I just didn't feel like, I don't know, I just wasn't important.

Dr. James Dobson: That emotion is still very close to the surface and I see now why you flinched, when I ask you to review that. And I'm sorry for having to take you back through that, Chris, but I think it's very important, as I said before, to understand where

you have been. You graduated from high school and then what happened to you?

Christene Jackman: Well, I moved out of the house when I was 17 after I graduated. And a year later, I married the first guy who paid any serious attention to me. And it wasn't good. We were just too young.

Dr. James Dobson: And what happened in the marriage?

Christene Jackman: The marriage only lasted like two and a half years. I left him when our son was like 11 months old. And then about a year after I was divorced, I became pregnant by someone else.

Dr. James Dobson: And what now?

Christene Jackman: I was already a single mom with a two year old and I wasn't in love with this guy. I didn't want to marry him. And so I really honestly did not give him a choice in the matter. It was like I had my mind made up. I can't do this. I cannot raise two kids by myself, I don't want to marry him.

Dr. James Dobson: You were absolutely lost, weren't you, Chris?

Christene Jackman: I felt so desperate and so afraid.

Dr. James Dobson: And so, you decided to have an abortion. Tell me about it.

Christene Jackman: It's like, I didn't want to think about it too much, the decision that I was making, because in my heart, I knew it was wrong. But I didn't want to listen to my conscience because this is what I made my mind up that I had to do and so I called the clinic and made the appointment.

Dr. James Dobson: Anybody give you any counsel, anybody try to talk you out of this?

Christene Jackman: The only one I told was my sister who couldn't bear the knowledge of knowing that I was going to go get an abortion. And so she ended up telling my family and they tried talking me out of it, but I was very hardheaded. And it's like, I can't.

Dr. James Dobson: What was the abortion itself like in its aftermath? I don't want to know the details of the abortion, but what were you thinking after that?

Christene Jackman: I think it was like completely numb. You go into that clinic and you come out and you're not the same.

Dr. James Dobson: Let's fast forward your story now and find out what happened after you had the abortion. What do you remember about the years that followed?

Christene Jackman: After the abortion, I just got a lot worse. I was a lot more promiscuous and about a year later, I was pregnant again. And I remember thinking, even though it was, oh, here I am in another crisis pregnancy, part of me, it may sound strange, but part of me thought, I didn't think God would ever let me have another baby because of what I did. I didn't think He could ever forgive me. So part of me was kind of relieved that I was pregnant again. And the father of the baby, when I told him about it, that I was pregnant, he insisted that, well, you have to get an abortion. And I told him, I can't do that. I've done this once before and I just cannot go through that again. He says, well, if you won't get an abortion, then I'm out of here. It's your problem. And he left. And so nine months later I had Shannon. And I went to a grocery store and on the way out, you know how they have those cards for people selling things, free ad type things. And I saw this ad for this baby car seat, and something compelled me to take that card. And I called that number and it ended up being someone who became my new daycare provider, who led me to Christ.

Dr. James Dobson: How did this woman demonstrate the love of Christ in your life?

Christene Jackman: Oh, she was so helpful, helped watching my kids and she and her husband just exemplified a good Christian marriage.

Dr. James Dobson: Now, Chris, I understand that even though you had become a Christian by that point, that you still hadn't truly dealt with the emotional effects of your abortion experience. In fact, isn't it true that it was several years later before you really faced what you'd done? How did the Lord deal with you at that time?

Christene Jackman: You know God, He's so gentle. He deals with issues as you can handle one thing at a time. And it finally got to the point where it's like, "Okay, Chris, we're going to talk about your abortion now." And one night I was watching, it was a PBS special on Nazi Germany, then the concentration camps. And I just remember watching this special and my heart was just like, oh God, how could you stand that? And the thought came to my mind, "Chris, you're no better. You took the life of your own child." And I just broke and I just remember just crying out to God saying, "Oh God, I don't know if you can, but please, please forgive me." And this wave of peace came over me and I could feel His presence and I knew I was forgiven.

Dr. James Dobson: Chris, there are people out there who still assert that there are no consequences to abortion for the mother. You would testify otherwise, wouldn't you?

Christene Jackman: Oh, I would definitely testify otherwise. I have talked personally with so many women and men who have been through an abortion and they are emotionally and spiritually scarred from this. How can you not be affected when you take the life of your own child? When you cut through all the rationalizations and it comes right down to it and you come to that moment in your life when you realize what you really did, it can almost drive you insane.

Dr. James Dobson: Tell me how you have used that experience to help others.

Christene Jackman: Well, eventually after that night that I found forgiveness, God led me to a special abortion recovery ministry called Morning Joy Ministries. And I happened to get Lynn on the phone and it's like, she must have known. She could tell I was post-abortive. And next thing I know she's talked me into going to this abortion recovery Bible studies support group. And it was phenomenal. It was awesome. And now, I can talk about it.

Dr. James Dobson: And there are so many women out there just like you, came through difficult childhoods, some of them, and went through a rebellious stage and made a mistake or two and wound up having an abortion or two or three or four, and are now out there without a way to deal with that pain and that guilt.

Christene Jackman: Right.

Dr. James Dobson: And you want to reach out to them?

Christene Jackman: Yes. Oh, I want them to be able to find what I've found, and that's grace. I've gotten a hold of grace.

Dr. James Dobson: Cort, let's bring you into the conversation now. How did you meet Chris?

Cort Langeland: I met Chris, I taught her music before she had revealed to anyone that she'd had an abortion. And she was a very gifted songwriter and just had a lot of stuff in her. Eventually she confessed to me that she had been post-abortive, and suddenly I saw where the root was for all this. And then a couple years later, she brought in front of me, the lyrics to her life story, her struggle with abortion. And she wanted to put it to music and produce a CD that told her story that others could relate to and understand how she found grace. So we started working on this record together. And so that's kind of where we came from.

Dr. James Dobson: And it is called?

Cort Langeland: It's called, *The Choice*. It chronicles Chris's entire experience with abortion. It starts with her actual experience in the clinic and what she went through there, moves into a time of regret and shame. And then it moves into this wonderful piece that has a child in conversation with God in Heaven. And the conversation goes like this. The child asks, "Father God, when is my mommy going to be here?" And God says, "Soon, my child, soon." "What do you think she's going to do when she sees me?" God says, "She'll run to you. She'll take you in her arms and she'll love you just as any other loving mother would do." "Father God, why has she never held me in her arms before?" God says "She never had the chance to do so, my child." "Why did she never have the chance, Father God?" And God says, "I don't remember, my child." And so that's where the album takes a transition into songs of healing and reconciliation and songs of worship.

Dr. James Dobson: The message of your story, Chris, for other women who are out there is that God never gave up on you when you were doing those terrible things. I mean, doing wrong things that were not only harmful to you and other people, but in violation of God's law. And pardon me for putting it in its most graphic terms, but you had killed your own baby. And yet God loved you and wanted a relationship with you and wanted to forgive you and wanted to bless your life and wanted to use you in His kingdom. If that isn't grace, what is it then? And you feel it, don't you?

Christene Jackman: It's like He knew what choice I was going to make before I ever walked into that clinic. And He still, He pursues us.

Dr. James Dobson: Cort, you look like you're about to speak.

Cort Langeland: I wanted to take off on just a little different tangent. God gave me a really unique experience, a really unique encounter to show me how much he loves women in this situation. A lot of times we focus on the baby and God just allowed me eyes to see how much He loves for a woman stuck in that crisis pregnancy situation. I was going to lunch alone and I was working on this project with Chris and I got to the elevator at lunch and I was going by myself and I thought, I should take something to read. So, I went back to my desk and I grabbed Sydna Massey and Joan Phillips book, *Her Choice to Heal*, to take just to read, to get some more understanding. So I went across the street to a new place I'd never been to before. And I sat down at a table and pretty quick, the restaurant filled up.

So, I thought, I can let some people sit here. So I went up to the bar, I put my book down, put my jacket on the back of a chair. I went to the restroom to wash up. When I came back, I found the book had been turned around. I thought, that's interesting. Somebody's been checking this out. And sure enough, this waitress comes out and first thing she says is, "What's a guy like you do in reading a book like this?" She just started to ask all kinds of questions. What does God think about abortion? What does the Bible say about abortion? Isn't it just a choice? Is this really a child? And we started to talk about the philosophy of it. And then I noticed that she was shaking and I thought, perhaps she's post-abortive. So I started to talk about grace and how God wants to just reach out and forgive and heal.

And as I turned it around to go, I took the book with me and I was just about to step out the door when I felt God just tug on my inside. God can speak to you without words. And I knew I had to give her the book. So, I turned it around and I said, "Would you like this book?" And before I finished my sentence, she had reached it, grabbed onto it with both hands and she had it held against her chest. And by this time there were some tears coming out of her eyes and she was really shaking. And I said, "I'll pick it back up in a couple of weeks, just take your time, read it." And I went out of there and I prayed for her. And I thought she was post-abortive and I was just excited to see what God wanted to do in her life.

Two weeks later, I went back there to have lunch with a friend. And all of a sudden I catch out of the corner of my eye, this same waitress, almost at a dead run over to our table. And she says, "Excuse me, but I just had to tell you, I'm keeping my baby." I said, "What?" She said, "I'm keeping my baby." And she says, "Oh no, you don't understand." She said, "Two weeks ago, when you came in, she said, I was scheduled to have an abortion at three o'clock that day." And she said, "I thought about what you said. I took the book." And she said, "I even went to the abortion clinic and they were running late. So I sat there for 45 minutes and I started to read that book and I knew I couldn't go ahead with it. So I called my boyfriend.

He came and picked me up. And she says, we're meeting with him minister. We've decided to get married." And she said, "I am so, so happy." And what I saw there was just the extent that God will go through to reach someone because I never intended to be there. He totally orchestrated the things and He just wanted to minister to that woman that he loved. And I thought that, that's the biggest thing we can do in this whole debate is to be there for people, is to whether it's on TV with ads, with phone numbers that girls in crisis pregnancy can call or just for post-abortive women and men to start to of tell their story so that women can approach them, if they become approachable. But just to extend that kind of grace.

Dr. James Dobson: See, the Lord used a book in that instance. I believe He's going to use this program and others. There are people listening to us right now who happen to be spinning the dial, happen to be at home and turn on the radio. And there we were, and there's this story. And it has evoked all of those feelings, all of that guilt, all that pain from an earlier time and the Lord is going to use this to reach them. I know every time we do a program like this, somebody writes us and says, "It was me. I was the one." And Chris, that makes the journey here and the efforts you've put into this, and in fact, opening your childhood to talk about this painful episode, worth it all, doesn't it?

Christene Jackman: Oh yeah, definitely worth it all.

Dr. James Dobson: And see, as Christians, we get very exercised over abortion and we say this shouldn't occur, and that's what we ought to be saying. But we also have to put an arm around those women who are scared, they're in a terribly difficult spot. Their boyfriends are putting pressure on them. Frequently, their mothers and fathers are putting pressure on them. And that's in essence what you were feeling.

Christene Jackman: Yes. I've talked to so many people who are post-abortive now, and there's a lot of mothers and fathers who think they're doing their daughter a service, or they think they're doing the right thing by telling their daughter to get an abortion. But, oh man, the ramifications are just huge. It will destroy the relationship between that daughter and the mother and father. I have seen so much anger come out because their parents did not protect them. Their parents made them go do this awful thing. And the anger issue is just huge.

Cort Langeland: One of the things that I think we can as Christians do is to move somewhat from the sense of outrage over abortion, to a sense of outreach. Reaching out to post-abortive folks, because the number of folks who are post-abortive is staggering. It's at least one in five in the church. As these people tell their stories, as they come out, as you find out friends that you have that are post-abortive, you'll get the whole story of the ramifications. You'll understand what happens and that it's bad for women and it's bad for men and it's bad for families. And as the truth comes out, that'll be the largest deterrent there is in this culture. But also as we can be there, those people in that situation are looking for absolutely anyone who will help them, but they're stuck in their silence.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. There is so much emotion. Chris, you mentioned the fact that you weren't thinking right.

Christene Jackman: I think that maybe if someone would've showed me what my baby looked like at eight to 12 weeks along, I had no idea that was a perfectly formed little baby.

Dr. James Dobson: A blob of tissue.

Christene Jackman: Yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: Protoplasm. That's what used to call it.

Christene Jackman: And it's like, no-

Dr. James Dobson: Fetus.

Christene Jackman: It's a little baby. And I heard that current research shows that babies at the age of 12 weeks are able to experience pain. And now that I've learned so much now about abortion procedures and how they're performed and it just horrified me. And I still talk to people today who do not understand exactly what the abortion procedure is and how developed the baby is.

Dr. James Dobson: Recent polling shows that we are winning this battle for the hearts and minds of the people. It's slow, but it's coming. And when you consider the progress that's been made in the area of public opinion, despite what Hollywood does and what television does and what popular media, the news media and so on are doing, we're still winning. This is an argument we're going to win. In the meantime, we need to do as much as we can to help the mothers avoid this tragedy. You agree?

Christene Jackman: I agree. And the biggest thing is, God's heart is so incredibly broken over this, this issue, not just the babies, but the women and the men and the extended families that are devastated by this. It's like, and yeah, we're going to win this. I think it will happen as more and more women and men who are post-abortive find freedom in Christ and find forgiveness and find their voice again.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, once again, this is James Dobson and I pray that you've been blessed by today's show and developed a greater passion for the fight for life. If you or someone you know is considering an abortion, because it feels like the only option, know that we are here and we care about you. We not only care about your baby, but we care about you, the mother. Please call our offices here in Colorado Springs at (877) 732-6825 and one of our representatives will be happy to pray with you or direct you to a crisis pregnancy center in your area. I started Family Talk to minister to families and help those in need, so if you would like some assistance of any sort, please call us, again, at (877) 732-6825.

Lastly, if you would like to share how this ministry has impacted you or how God has moved in your life or your family, I would love to hear about it. Just call our listener feedback line at (844) 823-2669. Once you dial, you will have two minutes to share your story or let us know your thoughts about our programs. That number again for Family Talk's listener feedback line is (844) 823-2669. Thank you for your love and support. I'm James Dobson and I'm so grateful that you joined us on this broadcast today. You're going to hear something like what we said today every year in January to make sure we don't forget Roe v. Wade or 60 plus million babies. And I hope you'll tune in tomorrow for another edition of Family Talk.

Announcer: This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.

Roger Marsh: Hey everyone, Roger Marsh here. When you think about your family and where they will be when you're no longer living, are you worried? Are you confident? Are you hopeful? What kind of legacy are you leaving for your children and their children? Here at Family Talk, we're committed to helping you understand the legacy that you're leaving for your family. Join us today at drjamesdobson.org for helpful insights, tips, and advice from Dr. James Dobson himself. And remember, your legacy matters.

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