

The Impact of “Surrendering the Secret” from a Pastor's Perspective

*“Post abortion ministry came into our church several years ago through a woman who had been healed of an abortion, and whom the opportunity was given to offer this ministry to the women in our church. Over the past several years more than 25 women have gone through **“Surrendering the Secret”** which is offered twice a year on our church campus. I am now, more than ever, aware that the sheer numbers of abortions that have taken place in our country mean that it is unlikely that any congregation, including ours, remains untouched. Sadly, I have also become aware of how abortion affects the lives of those (men and women) that have survived it and how many of them are filling our pews on Saturday night and Sunday mornings, suffering in silence under a shroud of guilt and shame. Many pastors, including myself, see the high divorce rate, the troubled marriages, depression, eating disorders, substance abuse and other self-destructive behaviors plaguing our church family, and are now witness to the deeper issue that often lies at the root of these problems: the life-altering wound left in the wake of an unresolved abortion experience. We are very thankful for **“Surrendering the Secret”**, through this study we have established ourselves as a safe place in which those that have been wounded by an abortion may find love, acceptance, hope and healing in Jesus Christ.”*

Rick Countryman, Sr. Pastor of Big Valley Grace Community Church Modesto, CA

*“I cannot even begin to express my gratitude for the **“Surrendering the Secret”** ministry, which has impacted our church family in ways that I could not have imagined. In 2008 my wife approached me about a burden that the Lord was putting on her heart for women suffering from post-abortive issues. She found the Bible study **“Surrendering the Secret”** and wanted to lead a group for our church and community. I agreed, all the while doubting if anyone would attend. While, in my head, I knew that there must be women in my congregation who had abortions in their past, it was hard for me to imagine any of our core members being in that group. As we began to speak about this to our church, slowly women began coming to my wife in private to share personal hurts and wounds from past experiences with abortion. Several of these women were part of our core group, and others who once were on the fringe, after going through this study have become active leaders with a whole new shining countenance. Several have had the courage to share their stories with our church, helping to foster an atmosphere of authenticity, and have begun ministering to other women with the same hurts. As a pastor, it is absolutely necessary to be strong in the biblical stance of resisting abortion. That’s the easy part. Being willing to compassionately address abortion recovery and being strong for those who need healing is harder, but the reward of seeing hearts restored and women becoming fully alive is measureless.”*

Brian Bond, Sr. Pastor of Greenwood Baptist Church Weatherford, TX

*“I firmly believe that this will change the church body as women and men will be set free by God’s grace and love and in return will live more boldly for Him for what He has done in their lives! Gratefully, we have leaders like Pat Layton who wrote the abortion recovery Bible study **“Surrendering the Secret”** as she herself was healed by God from the damage that her own abortion had left behind. These women start to realize how their past abortion has played into their current life struggles and the poor decisions they have made. They start to connect the dots of particular struggles (i.e. intimacy with spouse, parenting, anger, fear, addictions, spiritually ineffectiveness, etc.) back to their abortion. Through the study, these women begin to walk through the healing journey “safely.” As the women confront the truth of what the abortion actually did (i.e. loss of child) and go through the grief, the Lord is able to hold them and heal them to the point where the women have truly embraced God’s total forgiveness for their sin and are finally set free. Satan no longer has a hold on them by keeping the abortion a deep dark secret. Because of the miraculous healing our Lord does in their life, their relationships begin to improve as well as the way they see themselves. They are able to live more and love more and finally experience the abundant life that Christ died to give to all believers.”*

Dr. David O. Dykes, Pastor of Green Acres Baptist Church Tyler, TX

*“As a pastor I have had many folks confess failure and sin to me but not many who have confessed and sought freedom from the guilt of abortion. How does a woman get free and taste grace? The gospel of God’s grace lived out in a community of believers! Grace broke into a few women's lives in our church and grace, well, grace always spreads and sets others free. Once a person has the gospel set them free from an addiction, condemnation or failure they get free and want others free as well. So, the wild fire of grace has spread through the women in our church, and they are gathering together to surrender their secret using **“Surrendering the Secret”** as their guide. So thank you from a Pastor who is seeing women find freedom and fellowship. They are doing it with each other, for each other, and finding healing from the Great Physician Himself.”*

Adam A. Jones, Assistant Pastor of Seven Rivers Presbyterian Church, Lecanto, Florida