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Imagine being raised in a United Pentecostal church culture where sex was the last thing anyone ever talked about? Your mother saying things like "No dates until you are married" and your father saying things like "no one wants a used car and wives are just the same". Imagine your parents signing permission slips for you to be removed from sex education class and placed in a study hall instead because "all that will come naturally once you've tied the knot"...

But then imagine you've had your first alcoholic beverage at age 21 with some old high school friends; No one ever taught you that you had to watch your drink and you have no idea date rape drugs are even a thing. You wake up with your panties around your ankles and a strange man telling you "you're alright" and pointing you towards the exit door of the slummiest apartment you've ever seen. You finally get home and take a shower: you cry as you find bruises everywhere, your money is missing from your wallet, and in two weeks you'll miss your period, but you have no idea what that means because you never learned. Your breasts become sensitive and you finally discover you are pregnant because you've gone in to see your doctor about breast cancer; She is surprised how little you know about your own reproductive system. You panic and cry and shake your head "I can't be pregnant" and your first thoughts are ones of suicide because you'd rather die than have this all-consuming church culture you grew up in judge and abandon you in your young adult life. The future is just ending in your mind when the doctor puts a hand on your shoulder and says "you don't have to be pregnant".

It took all of 20 minutes and felt a little crampy, but I never felt guilty and the spirit of my unborn child has never haunted me like my mother claimed it would...the only thing I felt after my abortion was deep relief. I'm thankful for the women who supported me through that time and the friends that looked out for me after that. Being overprotected as a young person ended up scaring me, but because of the life-giving gift of abortion I was able to attend college, start three businesses, buy a car, buy a house, go on vacations, and get married...it I had already had a kid my husband would not have considered me as a marital option.