

Jesus tells us to “Do not be afraid”, “Do not fear”. In this article see how Dr. Les Ruppertsberger overcame his fear of not being popular and part of the in crowd.

Les Ruppertsberger is a doctor, an OB-GYN. He had a successful practice with a few partners, a happy family, and a nice house. He considered himself pro-life because he did not perform abortions. He did perform tubal ligations and prescribed birth control pills, but did not think much of it. His busy professional and personal life did not leave time for Church, until one day . . . he had a stroke. Although he recovered well, the experience humbled him, and he decided he wanted to grow in his faith. So he joined a parish Bible study. One day at the Bible study a question came up no one could answer. So they decided to call one of the parish priests to come to the next session and discuss it. He came the following week, and during the coffee break, Les got into a conversation with the priest who asked him what he did. Les said he was an OB-GYN. The priest asked him what he did about contraception in his practice. Les said that was what patients requested, and that is what he did for a living. The priest replied, “Oh. I see you coming up for communion every Sunday. How do you reconcile giving out the pill Monday through Friday, and receiving the Eucharist on Sunday?” Les became so upset that he had to leave the meeting. The following Sunday, he could not get up to receive the Eucharist at Mass. A couple of weeks later, he received a package from the priest with a tape of Janet Smith’s talk “Contraception: Why Not?,” a copy of *Evangelium Vitae*, and an invitation to a Natural Family Planning class. Les listened to the tape, read the encyclical, and attended the class. Then on Respect Life Sunday at Mass, another priest was preaching about contraception, abortion, and euthanasia. The priest, who did not know Les, was walking up and down the center aisle and when he got to the word contraception, his finger was pointed right at Les. Les’s son leaned over and said, “Dad, I think he’s talking to you.”

Les knew what God was asking of him, but he was afraid. He was afraid he would lose all he had worked so hard for, afraid of the opinions of his

partners, afraid of the reaction from his patients. In spite of his fear, the next day, Les announced to his staff and partners he would no longer be doing contraception, sterilization, or IUDs, and sent out 5,000 letters to his patients. His partners decided to cut his salary by a third, take it or leave it, so he took it. With the support of his wife and family, Les downsized his home, changed his lifestyle, and endured many days with empty hours in the office. He went to confession for 21 years of medical practice, doing what he thought was right but now knew was wrong, and, through the grace of God, received absolution. Les and his wife, Betty, became teachers of Natural Family Planning, and eventually led the Philadelphia Natural Family Planning Network, and the Alliance of Natural Family Planning Network. He also has a radio program on Catholic Radio called "NFP for Life." His practice picked up with many women seeking NFP-only care. Eventually he became the president of the Catholic Medical Association, and has helped spread the good news of NFP throughout the medical community.

Les Ruppensberger displayed great courage. He overcame his fear through his faith in God. Let us all display great courage and follow ALL the commandments of God. In God we trust for He is at our side!!!