



Bible & Life

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“Abortion & Sanctity of Life”

By David Dunlap

There are few issues as important in our personal lives and communities as abortion. It divides people not only on the streets and in workplaces, but also in homes and churches. After all, this issue involves personal decisions about sex, pregnancy, parenting, and our health. Whether or not they realize it, nearly every family, peer group, and church has, at some level, been touched by abortion. So while abortion is a difficult topic to discuss, it's important to provide accurate information, clarity, and a biblical context to this subject.

The Important Issue of Abortion

Since the watershed decision of the Supreme Court in 1973, which declared that the unborn fetus is not a legal person under the Constitution of the United States, as many as 64 million surgical abortions have been performed in this country.¹ Statistics point out the alarming evidence that the story of abortion is truly shocking. The rate of surgical and chemical abortions in the United States is approximately 1 million per year and continues to increase. Yet, on June 24, the Supreme Court held that the Constitution of the United States does not confer a right to abortion, and overruled *Roe v. Wade* thus turning the future decisions to statehouses.

The Shocking Statistics of Abortion

We react with horror and anger when the lives of 6 million innocent Jews were taken during the Holocaust. Is it not equally appalling that up to the present time 64 million babies have been intentionally destroyed? The total number of American war casualties throughout our country's history—including all wars from the War for Independence, the conflict in Vietnam, to our most recent wars is only a fraction when compared to the number of unborn babies that have been killed by legalized abortion. In fact, there are now more unborn babies killed by surgical abortion each year in the United States than the total number of American war casualties throughout its long history. Abortion causes approximately 3,000 infant

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Alan Guttmacher Institute/Planned Parenthood

casualties *every day* in America. That’s nearly as many victims as the total number of lives lost in the September 11, 2001 destruction of the World Trade Center in New York City. Moreover, the Guttmacher Institute, a polling agency originally affiliated with Planned Parenthood, reports that 18% percent of pregnancies in 2017 ended in surgical abortion. ²

The Methods of Abortion

The surgical methods used in many Planned Parenthood locations and other abortion centers are truly horrific. Many are aborted by the suction method, which tears and mutilates the tiny body, some by the “D and C” technique, which slices and scrapes until the womb is clean. Still others are killed by saline poisoning, which burns the tender skin of the unborn. If the fetus is too large for these methods, “Caesarian section” abortions are performed, where a baby fights for its life, but ultimately is left to die. Sadly, hardly anyone in the national print and broadcast media speaks out about these horrific methods of abortions practiced every day on a regular basis. Moreover, not one of those thousands of babies was protected by law in the decision concerning his or her destruction and subsequent death. How tragic! How sad!

What Does the Bible Say Concerning Abortion?

Does the Bible have anything to say about abortion? When we consult a Bible concordance, we find that the word “abortion” is not listed. However, the Scriptures deal very candidly and openly concerning the most basic question involved in the abortion issue. Is the fetus a human individual? Psalm 51 is David’s great prayer of repentance after his sin with Bathsheba. In verse 5, David acknowledges that “in sin my mother conceived me.” This does not mean that David was illegitimate but that he had a sinful nature from conception. David is simply saying that he was a human individual with a human nature before he was born. He was a person with all its innate qualities at the moment of conception.

In light of this teaching of Scripture, let us ask ourselves a couple of vital questions. Does a “Blob of protoplasm” have a sinful nature? If the unborn fetus is merely a “piece of tissue,” would the Bible attribute a sinful nature to it? Scripture evidence from the Old and New Testaments is that the sinful nature is uniquely and inseparably associated with human life which begins at the very moment of *conception*.

The Scriptural Evidence Luke 1:44

A number of other Scriptures support the basic truth that a fetus is a “person”. Consider for example Psalm 139:13-16 and Jeremiah 1:4-5. Both David and Jeremiah speak of themselves as a person *before* birth. In Luke 1:44, we read that John the Baptist leaped in his mother’s womb for joy. A “Blob of protoplasm” can hardly experience the emotion of joy. Joy is a human emotion. Some will argue that this was only Elizabeth’s way of

speaking about the unborn baby's kicking in the womb. But let us be careful about handling Scripture this way. It is true that historical contexts and cultural settings must be taken into account when interpreting Scripture, but always remember that the Holy Spirit is the ultimate Author of Scripture, and His inspiration extends to its very words. Is it not possible that God is teaching us something about the human fetus in Luke 1:44?

In view of these Scriptures, is it possible to come to any logical conclusion other than that the fetus is a person? A Supreme Court ruling about when personhood begins in no way changes the infallible and eternal Word of God. Unborn babies are human individuals or "persons" from the moment of conception, as far as God is concerned. Dare we take a position that condones abortion or is even neutral concerning this issue?

Is the Fetus Human But Not a Person?

There are some pro-abortion advocates who argue that the fetus is human but not a person. In 2012, two ethicists wrote an article for the *Journal of Medical Ethics* arguing that doctors should be allowed to abort new born babies because they're "not persons."³ They wrote that when "circumstances occur after birth such that they would have justified abortion, what we call 'after-birth abortion' should be permissible." The authors admitted that "both a fetus and a newborn certainly are human beings and potential persons," but argued that "neither is a 'person' in the sense of subject of a moral right to life." How should one respond to such an argument?

Personhood Is a Value that Comes From God

Most people are naturally horrified at the idea of killing newborn babies. But what most people fail to realize is that the authors' argument is precisely the same argument used by abortion advocates to justify aborting babies *before* they are born. In fact, very similar arguments were used to justify terrible evils like slavery and the Jews during the Holocaust, as well as the dehumanizing treatment of the disabled and mentally ill. Their rights were violated because it was sometimes said and often believed that blacks, Jews, and the physically or mentally ill "aren't people, at least not fully." The argument goes like this: While the unborn child (or slave or Jew) is indeed a living human being, he or she isn't a "person" and therefore doesn't have the right to life.

Tyrants must dehumanize before they can commence their evil work or murder or slavery. Where does personhood come from? What if personhood isn't something bestowed on human beings by Ivy League professors and ethicists who favor ridding society of "undesirables" and those "less valuable?" What if the right of personhood comes from God through divine creation? What if personhood has an inherent value that

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comes simply from being a member of the human race? Ironically, this is what most people and professors, until only recently, believed.

Carelessly Playing with Words

Arbitrarily changing the meaning of words doesn't change reality. The modern concept of "personhood," redefined specifically to justify abortion, is hopelessly subjective and virtually worthless as an ethical guide. The only objective questions we can ask are these:

- "Is it human; did life come from a mother and father?"
- "Is it a genetically unique individual?"
- "Is it alive and growing?"

Conclusion

The sanctity of human life is undeniably supported throughout the entire Bible. Our responsibility before God is to protect human life—born and unborn. To intentionally terminate the life of an unborn baby is always wrong—regardless of circumstances, culture, or courts.

Countless people today, often well-meaning individuals, are confused and brainwashed by the media concerning abortion. As Christians, we should take every opportunity to speak out against abortion. But Christians should not only speak—we should also reach out in compassion to those who are desperately struggling to do the right thing in the appalling issue of abortion.

Endnotes

1. Randy Alcorn, *Pro-Choice or Pro-Life?* (Sandy, OR: EPM Publishers, 2020), p. XVI
2. Guttmacher Institute, "Induced Abortion in the United States," September 2019, www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-united-states.
3. Cited in Liz Klimas, "Ethicists Argue in Favor of 'After-Birth Abortions,' as Newborns Are Not Persons," *The Blaze*, February 27, 2012, www.theblaze.com/ethicists-argue-in-favor-of-after-birth-abortions-as-newborns-are-not-persons.