

Abortion

Reference: *Counter Culture – Following Christ in an anti-Christian Age* by David Platt

Across the world, more than forty-two million abortions occur every year. That's 115,000 abortions every single day. And just as German Christians during WW2 should not have ignored the reality of what was happening in concentration camps across their country, Christians should not ignore the reality of what is happening in abortion clinics across the world.

A true story:

Abby was in her early twenties. She had grown up in a Christian home, attended a Christian school, and had even joined a church. But a relationship with Christ was far from a reality in Abby's life. Instead, she was consumed with her work and caught up in the pleasures and pursuits of the world. She met a man who captivated her thoughts and quickened her emotions, and before long they had given themselves to each other. Everything was going great.

Until Abby discovered that she was pregnant and he was gone. In an instant, it seemed as though the world had come crashing down around her. This can't be, she thought. I can't have a baby. My reputation will be ruined, my family will be shamed, and my career will be over. Enveloped by panic and gripped with fear, Abby saw a lone solution to her problem—only one way out of her predicament.

One Friday afternoon, Abby walked into an abortion clinic. Within a couple of hours, her problem was solved and her predicament taken care of (or so she thought). The following Monday morning, she returned to business as usual and life as normal, hiding the secret of what she'd done as if nothing had ever happened.

GOD AND THE UNBORN

As you read through the Bible, you won't find the word abortion anywhere. But that doesn't mean Scripture is silent about it, for the core truths we've already seen in the gospel concerning who God is, who we are, and what Christ has done speak directly to the issue of abortion.

Consider the way the Bible describes the relationship between God and an unborn baby. The psalmist writes to God:

You formed my inward parts;

you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.

My frame was not hidden from you,

when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes saw my unformed substance;
in your book were written, every one of them,
the days that were formed for me,
when as yet there was none of them.

PSALM 139:13-16

As we read these words, we're reminded of the core gospel truth that God is the Creator. He alone has the power and authority to give life. Elsewhere in the Bible, Job says, "The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life" (Job 33:4). He also says, "In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind" (Job 12:10).

God is not only the Giver of life; he is also the Taker of life. Again, Job confesses, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away" (Job 1:21).

God himself declares, "I put to death and I bring to life" (Deuteronomy 32:39, NIV).

This is why murder and suicide are both sins. It is God's prerogative alone, as Creator, to give and take innocent life. In light of these biblical realities, it becomes abundantly clear that abortion is an affront to God's sole and sovereign authority as the Giver and Taker of life. Abortion, like murder or suicide, asserts human beings as the ones who control life and death. But God the Creator alone has the right to determine when someone lives and dies, and abortion flies directly in the face of his authority.

Abortion is not only an affront to God's authority as Creator; it is also an assault on his work in creation. Did you hear the psalmist describe the beauty of the way God forms the "inward parts" of a baby in a "mother's womb"?

As the psalmist reflects on God's work in the womb, he responds in an outburst of worship: "I praise you! I am fearfully and wonderfully made!"

The way God creates people compels praise. These verses are all the more stunning when we realize that the psalmist came to his conclusions without knowing so many of the details that we know today concerning a baby's development. The psalmist didn't necessarily know how God takes an egg and a sperm and brings them together. How a few weeks later, often before a woman even realizes she is pregnant, a human heart is beating and circulating its own blood. Within a few more weeks, fingers are forming on hands and brain waves are detectable. Before long, these "inward parts" are moving. Kidneys are forming and functioning, followed by a gall bladder, and then by the twelfth week, all the organs of a baby boy or girl are functional, and he or she can cry. All of this occurs within three short months—only the first trimester! A heart, a brain, organs, sexuality, movement, reaction—

and the Creator of the universe is orchestrating all of it! This work of creation evokes awe and amazement.

So then, imagine in this moment of creation inserting a tool, taking a pill, or undergoing an operation that takes the very life God is developing and destroys it. Most abortions occur between ten and fourteen weeks of gestation —what is described as the “optimal time” for dismemberment and removal.

Abortion is without question an assault on God’s grand creation of a human life. There is no way around it.

THE KEY QUESTION

The key question that we all must answer—and the question that determines how we view abortion—is this: What is contained in the womb? Is it a person? Or is it merely an embryo, a fetus? Virtually every other question and every single argument in the abortion controversy comes back to this question: What, or who, is in the womb? And once this question is answered, everything else comes into perspective. As author Gregory Koukl points out, “If the unborn is not a human person, no justification for abortion is necessary.” And some people contend this. They will say that the unborn is not a person or that the unborn is merely a person who has the potential to become human (whatever that means). Again, if this is true, the argument is over; no justification for abortion is necessary.

However, as Koukl writes, “If the unborn is a human person, then no justification for abortion is adequate.”[5] Many people say, “Abortion is such a complex issue, and there just aren’t any easy answers.” But if what is in the womb is a person, then even if someone is pro-abortion or pro-choice for any number of reasons, all of their reasoning falls apart. Regardless of where you currently stand on the abortion issue, imagine for a moment that the unborn is a person formed and created by God himself. If this is true, then think through the primary arguments for abortion.

“Women have a right to privacy with their doctors.” Without question, we all have a right to some measure of privacy. Yet our laws regularly override people’s privacy when another person’s life is in question. No woman or man has a right to a private conversation with a doctor to conspire how to end someone else’s life. If the unborn are people, then we must protect them, regardless of what that means for someone’s privacy.

“Women should have the right to choose.” Yet we all agree that no one should have unlimited rights to make choices. If toddlers or teenagers become burdensome or expensive, parents don’t have the right to eliminate them. Similarly, then, when it comes to abortion, the real question is not whether a woman has a choice, but whether that woman actually has a human being that God recognizes as a valuable person in her womb. If so, then a moral duty to honor life supersedes the personal hardship that might come due to pregnancy. Choosing to terminate innocent life is by definition choosing to murder.

Indeed, the primary issue in the debate over abortion is the identity of the unborn. Listen to Gregory Koukl describe a little girl named Rachel, a daughter of a family friend:

Rachel is two months old, but she is still six weeks away from being a full-term baby. She was born prematurely at 24 weeks, in the middle of her mother's second trimester. On the day of her birth Rachel weighed one pound, nine ounces, but dropped to just under a pound soon after.

She was so small she could rest in the palm of her daddy's hand. She was a tiny, living, human person. Heroic measures were taken to save this child's life. Why? Because we have an obligation to protect, nurture, and care for other humans who would die without our help— especially little children. Rachel was a vulnerable and valuable human being. But get this . . . if a doctor came into the hospital room and, instead of caring for Rachel, took the life of this little girl as she lay quietly nursing at her mother's breast, it would be homicide. However, if this same little girl—the very same Rachel—was inches away resting inside her mother's womb, she could be legally killed by abortion.

To any reasonable person, this makes absolutely no sense. Abortion is utterly ludicrous if this is a child in the womb. Everything—everything!—revolves around what is happening in a mother's womb, and Scripture is clear: that womb contains a person being formed in the image of God. Any distinction between the unborn and a person (or a human and a person, for that matter) is both artificial and unbiblical. God recognizes the unborn as a person and designs the unborn for life from the moment of conception. While our culture is continually pushing against this idea, it is not possible to believe the Bible and deny that the unborn are persons. And once followers of Christ accept this, we can no longer sit idly by while people are mercilessly murdered in their mothers' wombs.

WONDERFUL WORKS

Abortion not only assaults God's work in creation, it also attacks God's relationship with the unborn. One of the wonderful things about Psalm 139 is the glimpse we get into how God relates to a child in the womb. He is intimately involved in the life of that baby from the moment of conception— and even before that! God tells Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you" (Jeremiah 1:5, NKJV).

The psalmist says to God, "You are He who took Me out of the womb . . . from My mother's womb You have been My God" (Psalm 22:9-10, NKJV).

Scripture speaks about how God calls, names, and blesses children while they are still in the womb (see Galatians 1:15; Isaiah 49:1; Luke 1:15). The Bible even describes a baby leaping with joy in the womb (see Luke 1:39-44)! God reminds us in his Word that though an unborn baby is visibly hidden from us, he or she is not hidden from him. God sees children in wombs all across the world right now, and he is personally forming, fashioning, knitting, creating, nurturing, shaping, and crafting them in wonderful ways (see Job 31:15; 10:8-12).

With the advancement of medical technology that enables us to detect gender before birth, people in countries around the world now have the choice to abort children based on this revelation. China, for example, limits the number of children each family can have, and it's advantageous to have boys, which subsequently leads to the abortion of many girls. In India,

it's much more expensive to have a girl (because a family will lose money on her dowry), so families who find out the child in the womb is a girl will often choose to discard her.

Do we believe this is right? Aren't all children, regardless of gender, wonderfully made in God's image? And if it's not right for people to discard girls in China or India for the sake of their convenience, then why is it right for us to discard children elsewhere in the world for our convenience?

This is not only an issue when it comes to the sex of a child but also when it comes to disability in children. It is possible for us to determine whether a baby in the womb is at risk for Down syndrome or other disabilities that will affect his or her life. So should abortion be permissible in such circumstances? Again, not if we actually believe all of God's works are wonderful.

Consider the man born blind in John 9. Most of the Jews who knew this man would have considered his disability a sure sign of sin in either his life or his parents' lives. So the disciples ask Jesus, "Whose fault is this?" Jesus answers them, "This is not his or his parents' fault, but this happened so that the wonderful works of God might be revealed to and through him." Jesus reveals that this man was born blind so that one day he might see, know, declare, and delight in the glory of Christ.

We must not deny the wonderful work of God even (or especially) in disability. Even when we don't understand it, God has a design and a desire to use everything for our good and his glory (see Romans 8:28), and it is not only wrong but also foolish to play god in such situations by essentially saying that we know better than he does. Likewise, God's works are wonderful even (or especially) in the midst of difficulty.

God is not only the Judge of sin, but he is also the Savior of sinners. God is the Judge who loathes abortion and the King who loves even those who participate in it, so hear this good news. To anyone and everyone who has ever aborted a child, supported abortion, encouraged abortion, performed abortion, permitted abortion, or done nothing about abortion, may the following realities lodge deep within your soul.

God forgives entirely. "As the heavens are high above the earth, so great is [God's] mercy toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:11-12, NKJV).

God says, "I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins" (Isaiah 43:25). "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). The good news of the gospel is that when we turn from our sin and trust in Christ, we find that he has paid the price for any part we have ever played in abortion, and because of his cross, we are entirely forgiven.

God not only forgives entirely, but he also heals deeply. God does not desire for you or anyone else to live with the pain of regret. It is altogether right to hate sin in your history. The pain of past sin is often a powerful deterrent to future sin, but don't let it rob you of the peace God has designed for you in the present. Remember what Jesus said to a woman who

had lived an immoral lifestyle: “Your sins are forgiven. . . . Your faith has saved you; go in peace” (Luke 7:48-50). God desires that peace to be yours today.

He forgives entirely, he heals deeply, and he restores completely. To all who trust in Christ, remember this: in Christ you are not guilty, and there is no condemnation for you. This is true whether you have had one abortion or five. This is true whether you have medically performed thousands of abortions or legally permitted millions. You do not walk around with a scarlet A on your chest, for God does not look at you and see the guilt of abortion. Instead, he looks at you and sees the righteousness of Christ. God restores, and he redeems. Even as we saw earlier, God has a track record of working all things, including evil things, ultimately for good.

Remember Abby, at the beginning of this article For years she kept the secret of her abortion to herself. But on the weekend that her husband proposed to her, she decided she needed to tell him what she had done years before they met. He listened graciously, and they chose to keep it a secret between them for the next eight years. No one else knew. Until one day Abby and her husband were talking with some friends who told them about the freedom and forgiveness found in the gospel. Abby knew about Christ and had grown up in church, but the words of Isaiah 61 had never clicked in her mind and heart. In a passage that Jesus would later quote in reference to himself, the Bible says, “The LORD . . . has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound . . . to comfort all who mourn . . . to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit” (Isaiah 61:1-3).

For the first time, Abby realized why Christ came and died on the cross. He came to heal the broken hearts of people just like her by freeing them from their bondage to sin and shame. For fifteen years Abby had done all she could to cover her past in order to have others’ approval. Now, for the first time, she knew that in Christ she had God’s approval, regardless of her past.

The freedom Abby has experienced now propels her to lead a ministry in the church that reaches out to women who have had abortions. She has received training on how to wisely, carefully, and compassionately come alongside these women to serve and support them. She puts this training into practice on a regular basis with groups of women in the city. In addition to leading other women in the church, Abby is actively involved in public efforts to minimize abortions in the city, specifically counseling pregnant women who are considering abortions, sharing her own story, and telling them there is another way to solve their “problem.” She does all of this together with her husband and two children—a beautiful daughter, and a wonderful son. It is a priceless picture to see this woman who once thought abortion had permanently stained her past and forever stolen her peace now transformed by the gospel, and to watch God use her quite literally to save countless children’s—and women’s—lives.