

“Biblical Reasons to Protect the Unborn”

Main Idea: When it comes to abortion, there are three biblical concerns which motivate us to take action. Notice the concerns are biblical and moral, not political.

I. We have concern for the baby.

A. Does society consider the unborn to be a person?

1. "We are an accident evolved from slimy algae."
2. "Children are expendable commodities."

3. "I don't see how rights apply to potential humans, therefore, because I don't assign human status to fetal life, I see no ethical objection to using fetal tissue in transplants." --Joseph Fletcher, father of situation ethics--

B. Does God consider the unborn to be a person?

Key Texts: Ex 21:22-25; Ps 139:13-15; Jer 1:4-5;

1. Where do the unborn come from? (Gen 1:27; Job 10:12; Ps 127:3)
2. When does life begin? (2 Sam 11:5; Lk 1:15, 36)

3. How does God view the abuse of children? (Lev 20:1-5; Mt 8:10; Amos 1:13)

4. What about a "right to my own body?" (1 Cor 6:19-20)

II. We have concern for the mother...and father.

A. God expects us to help. (Gal 6:1)

B. God extends forgiveness. (1 Jn 1:9)

III. We have concern for our society.

Key Texts: Mt 22:36-40; Mt 25:37-40; 1 Jn 2:4-6; Mt 5:14

Response: What Can I Do?

1. Pray.
2. Seek ways to help the helpless. Get involved in CRADLE.
3. Be a responsible citizen. Register and be an informed voter.
4. Communicate with our elected officials in Washington and Columbus.
5. Live for the honor of God Himself.

A few years ago I had an interesting conversation with my sister on the telephone. She was in her family practice residency and was telling me about her recent experience working with premature babies. It is incredible to think of what the medical profession can do, by the grace of God. They have the technology to preserve the life of one pound babies that left the security of their mother's womb too early. Sadly, some are using medical technology to accomplish very different results.

A week from today is "Sanctity of Human Life" Sunday. Why do we have such a day? For two primary reasons. One, because the life of a person created in the image of God is sacred. And two, human life which is sacred is being discarded at a rate which is mind-boggling.

On January 22 we will observe the 33rd anniversary of the legalization of abortion in this country. Tragically, 50,000,000 babies have died in that time at a rate of 4,400 babies every day, or one every 20 seconds (stats from "Ohio Right to Life Society" letter, January 1996).

Loren Cunningham has said, "The safest place to be in this country, per population group, is on Death Row (BFL Lifelines, Winter 1989). It has also been said that the most dangerous place on earth is to be in your mother's womb where you have a 60% chance of surviving. An ice-trapped whale elicits more sympathy than an unwelcome baby.

What should be our response, as the people of God, to this situation? Abortion advocates will probably be meeting for rallies this week to celebrate 33 years of so-called freedom for women. Many people just wish this issue would go away. Sadly, surveys show that two of five Christians contend that "there is no right or wrong side to abortion" ("Tidings," March 1991). Just as sadly is the fact that, in our age of political correctness, many churchgoers consider abortion to be a political issue, and have never given serious attention to what the Bible has to say about it.

God indeed has spoken clearly about the issue. What does He have to say? We shall see this morning.

The fact that the word "abortion" is not in the Bible does not mean that God is silent on the subject. We don't find the word "cocaine" either, but it is not too difficult for Christians to discern what God thinks about its use. What's the issue then?

When it comes to abortion, the basic question is whether God considers the unborn to be a person. If the answer is "no," then why wouldn't we have the right to dispose of a fetus like we would any other unwanted appendix or tumor? But if the answer is "yes," the situation is very different as we shall see.

When it comes to abortion, there are three biblical reasons which should motivate us to take action to protect the unborn. The concerns are biblical and moral, not political.

I. We have concern for the Baby.

Rather than camping on one text, we'll be looking at many passages from God's Word in this topical message. To begin let's turn to Psalm 82. This psalm was penned by Asaph. In it Asaph calls on God to deal with human judges. We have judges today, men and women who make legal decisions that affect our lives. The Israelites had judges, too. In this psalm Asaph meditates on the truth that God will deal with judges who fail to recognize that He is the ultimate Judge.

Speaking for God in verses 3-4 Asaph calls on these judges to do their jobs in the right way, "Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. ⁴ Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."

God knows what human judges are doing. And He will deal with those who ignore His holy standard. Ultimately, our confidence is not in men but in God Himself. Asaph concludes his psalm with this appeal in verse 8, "Rise up, O God, judge the earth, for all the nations are your inheritance."

Now, let the message of verses 3-4 sink in. As the people of God, we have a responsibility to help the helpless (do a study sometime of what God has to say about our responsibility to orphans, widows, and other individuals who cannot defend themselves). And certainly one of the most vulnerable, defenseless groups of people in our day are the unborn.

We have a concern for the baby. Which raises two questions.

A. Does society consider the unborn to be a person?

Our Supreme Court's answer in 1973 was no. What does secular society believe about the unborn? It goes back to the question of origins.

The Bible teaches in Genesis 1:27, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." That's what a human being is, *an image-bearer* of God.

I have a picture of my wife and two daughters in my study. The picture is made of paper and ink, worth merely a few dollars. But if you came into my study, took that picture and tore it up, I'd be upset. Why? It's not because that piece of paper has intrinsic worth but derived worth. That picture presents the image of my wife and daughters.

According to God's Word, you and I and every other human being are created in the *image of God*. We do not have inherent worth, contrary to humanism which basically worships man. But we do have worth, derived worth. Our worth comes because we have the distinct privilege, not know by any other creature in the universe, the privilege of *image-bearing*.

That's what the Bible teaches. What does our world believe about man?

1. *"We are an accident evolved from slimy algae."*

Please know that anthropology affects morality. The statement, "Man is created in the image of God" affects your view of morality. So does the statement, which is the presupposition of evolution, "Man is an accident evolved from slimy algae, no different fundamentally than the animals."

2. *"Children are expendable commodities."*

If a "fetus" in the womb is not a person, but a piece of tissue, then it follows that its elimination is a natural option. Unborn children are expendable. In a world that operates on the survival-of-the-fittest evolutionary presupposition, the life growing inside the womb does not have any rights. It may be living, but it is not a person. Thus, it is an expendable commodity.

It's interesting how even society has changed in its attitude towards life. In a 1963 Planned Parenthood World Population brochure, a statement reads: "An abortion kills the life of a baby after it has begun. It is dangerous to your life and health. It may make you sterile so that when you want a child you cannot have it." Planned Parenthood's message today is quite different. I checked out their website this week and noticed they now describe abortion as "safe" and relatively painless and free of complications afterwards.

3. *"I don't see how rights apply to potential humans, therefore, because I don't assign human status to fetal life, I see no ethical objection to using fetal tissue in transplants." --Joseph Fletcher, father of situation ethics--*

Notice the terminology. Fletcher calls the baby a "potential person." The common mentality is that the "fetus" does not become a viable "person" until birth (some might argue it occurs during the second or third trimester).

The question we must ask then is this...

B. Does God consider the unborn to be a person?

Key Texts: Ex 21:22-25; Ps 139:13-15; Jer 1:4-5

To answer that question, allow me to open the Scriptures and address four additional questions (see "Key Scriptures Concerning Abortion," compiled by: Crusade for Life, P. O. Box 1433, Whittier, CA 90609).

1. Where do the unborn come from? (Gen 1:27; Job 10:12; Ps 127:3)

Again, Genesis 1:27 states, "God created man in His own image." Job acknowledged this in Job 10:12, "You have granted me life." Human life is not the consequence of some chance-event, but as Job rightly understood, it is the result of the handiwork of a sovereign God.

We see this pointedly stated in Psalm 127:3, "Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him." The point is that the unborn come from God.

2. When does life begin? (2 Sam 11:5; Lk 1:15, 36)

Throughout Scripture, conception has marked the beginning of an individual's life. We find an interesting statement in 2 Samuel 11:5, after David had called Bathsheba to his palace, "The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, 'I am pregnant.'" The KJV reads, "I am with child." The pre-born is identified as a child.

Consider what the Bible says concerning John the Baptist in Luke 1:15, "And he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb." In verse 36, the angel told Mary this about pregnant Elizabeth, "And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age also has conceived a son."

Life begins at conception. The unborn child is not merely viable tissue, but a living person.

Former U. S. Surgeon General, C. Everett Koop, made this indicting observation: "I would like to suggest to you that we are a schizophrenic society. We will fly a deformed baby four hundred miles by airplane to perform a series of remarkable operations on such a youngster, knowing full well that the end result will be far less than a complete cure. We will stop a cholera epidemic by vaccine in a country unable to feed itself so that the people can survive cholera in order to die of starvation. While we struggle to save the life of a three pound baby in a hospital such as mine, next door in the University Hospital obstetricians are destroying infants yet unborn."

3. How does God view the abuse of children? (Lev 20:1-5; Mt 8:10; Amos 1:13)

Consider these texts, the first being Leviticus 20:2. The pagan nations surrounding Israel practiced child sacrifice. Here's what God had to say about that, "Say to the Israelites: 'Any Israelite or any alien living in Israel who gives any of his children to Molech must be put to death. The people of the community are to stone him.'" God's people are not to use their children for their own self-centered goals, even if they are religious goals.

In Matthew 18:10 Jesus warned, "See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven."

Amos 1:13 is sobering, "This is what the LORD says: 'For three sins of Ammon, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath. Because he ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead in order to extend his borders.'"

In fact, the Law of Moses specifically covered the life of the unborn. Check out Exodus 21:22-24: "If men who are fighting hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman's husband demands and the court allows.²³ But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life,²⁴ eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot."

Notice that the life of the "fetus" is considered as important as the mother's. Death of the unborn was considered murder. Meredith Kline, a Hebrew scholar, states (JETS 20 {Sept., 1977}: 193), "This law, found in Exodus 21:22-25, turns out to be perhaps the most decisive positive evidence in this Scripture that the fetus is to be regarded as a living person."

The key Hebrew phrase in this text is found in verse 22. The KJV translates the phrase, "her fruit departs from her." Literally, the phrase means "and her children come out." Harry E. Fletcher summarizes ("Tidings", March 1991, p. 1), "It can be concluded from this Old Testament passage that the life of the unborn is to be regarded as no less than a human life since there is no distinction made between the punishment for the death/injury of the unborn and the death/injury of the mother. Indeed, the same punishment is to be meted out for the murderer of the unborn child as the

murderer of any human being. God values the life of the unborn."

4. *What about a "right to my own body?" (1 Cor 6:19-20)*

Who owns the body of the believer according to 1 Corinthians 6:19-20? "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body."

Even the unregenerate does not have absolute "rights," but will give an account to his Maker for what he has done in this life.

The question again is, does God consider the unborn to be a person? The answer most assuredly is yes. If you still aren't convinced, check out two more powerful texts.

Psalms 139:13-15 states, "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth."

Here's what Jeremiah wrote in Jeremiah 1:4-5, "The word of the LORD came to me, saying, ⁵ "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

There are three reasons that ought to motivate us to take action to protect the unborn. We've seen the first—we have a concern for the baby. Here's the second...

II. We have concern for the mother...and father.

I say "and father" because he is often forgotten in the discussion.

Former Surgeon General, C. Everett Koop, and Francis A. Schaeffer, made this statement in *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?*:

"'Why didn't anyone tell me?' is a fair question from a girl suffering the after effects of a recommended abortion. 'Why didn't anyone tell me I would feel like a mother with empty arms?' 'Why didn't anyone tell me I risked spoiling the possibility of having a normal pregnancy, because of the damage that might be done to my body by the abortions?' These are not just theoretical questions put forth in an abstract academic debate. Abortion counselors rarely talk about physical dangers, emotional results, and psychological consequences...To stamp out these feelings is to ensure that many women will turn into the kind of hard people they may not want to be."

When we think of the statistics—50 million aborted babies in the past 33 years—most of us are probably stunned in shame and even anger out of concern for the babies who never had a chance. And so should we be. But there's someone else who needs our concern--the mothers. There are millions of mothers who are living with the trauma of the decision they made to terminate the life God placed within them.

I was staggered by a statement I read on Planned Parenthood's website, "Nearly half of all U.S. women will have an abortion by the time they are 45 years old."

When it comes to concern for the mother, the Bible teaches two truths.

A. God expects us to help. (Gal 6:1)

Ponder the admonition given to us in Galatians 6:1, "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted."

Friends, it's one thing to start making noise about how abortion is wrong--and it is--but it's quite another thing to choose to get involved in the lives of women who are considering abortion or who have already had an abortion.

That's why the ministry of CRADLE was established. There's a wide open door of ministry opportunity in a woman's life when an unwanted pregnancy occurs. And CRADLE exists to assist local churches in giving the hope of Christ to those mothers (and fathers, too). The aim is to stop the finger-pointing and show the love of Christ to people in hard circumstances.

I am convinced that the solution for the abortion blight in our country is not to be found in legislation in Washington --though I thank God for those who are at work in defense of the helpless unborn. The solution is for the people of God to do what Christ would do in showing practical love to hurting people, to help the world see there is a better way.

What would God have us as a church do this year to make an even greater difference in Scioto County ? We need to prayerfully consider the matter. We'll be hearing a brief report from Donna Clark who serves at CRADLE in a few moments.

What about the millions of people who have been scarred by their past, sinful choices to have an abortion? Is there hope for them? The Good News is yes! Why?

B. God extends forgiveness. (1 Jn 1:9)

Is it a sin to take a human life? Yes. As is any other violation of God's standard, including gossip, lust, greed, and jealousy. The fact is, *all* of us are sinners who have violated the holy standard of a holy God.

But the good news is that God in His mercy offers forgiveness. On what basis? On the basis of His Son's death as a substitute on the cross. Christ died to pay sin's penalty, then conquered the grave. Today God offers forgiveness to any sinner who will repent and believe in Christ.

1 John 1:9 reads, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Through Jesus Christ, our sin can be erased. That goes for abortion. Jesus paid the penalty for all of our sin at Calvary .

If you or someone you know has the scar of sin in your past, I encourage you to follow the counsel of 1 John 1:9 tonight. If you will confess your sin, God will forgive you.

Should there be exceptions to the sanctity of human life? The question always comes up, "What about cases of rape and incest? Should a woman be *forced* to carry the child of a man who has so violated her?" At this point, the issue becomes quite emotional.

In response we could first ask, "What do the numbers tell us?" How many of the abortions are actually "hard cases"? (see BFL Lifelines; Sept-Oct 1988) Here the deception comes to light. With approximately 100,000 assault rapes occurring yearly in the U.S. , we can estimate that less than 1000 pregnancies result. If all 1000 babies were aborted, this would account for less than .06% of the abortions performed. Since not all rape pregnancies are terminated, this number is much smaller. The number of pregnancies from incest is likewise accounts for a very small percentage of the total number of abortions.

But the real issue isn't the statistics. The issue again is what God has to say about the sanctity of life. Does one wrong justify another? Does rape or incest give grounds for murder? Furthermore, abortion, far from curing the problems of a victim of rape or incest, only increases her feelings of guilt, self-blame, and grief. There's a much more loving, hope-giving option. And when we do things God's way we have God's grace to supply the need.

We have three biblical concerns which motivate us to take action in upholding the sanctity of life: concern for the baby, concern for the mother, and...

III. We have concern for our Society.

Key Texts: Mt 22:36-40; Mt 25:37-40; 1 Jn 2:4-6; Mt 5:14

What did Jesus identify as the greatest commandments? Love the Lord your God, and love your neighbor as yourself (Mt 22:36-40). We are not permitted the luxury of moving through life thinking only of ourselves. We are to put others ahead of ourselves.

Remember what Jesus said about helping the helpless in Mt 25:37-40? "Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of my brothers, you did it to me."

John gave this instruction in 1 John 2:4-6, "The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵ But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: ⁶ Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did."

What would Jesus do if He lived in America in 2006? That question ought to be the compass that guides us through the rugged terrain of our day. We live in a dark day morally. But remember, the darker the night, the brighter the effect of the light. Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hidden (Matt 5:14)."

Beloved, ignoring the fact of abortion is not an option for the Christian. Why not? Martin Luther commented on the commandment, "You shall not murder," by reminding his readers that one may break this command by omission as well as by commission. He wrote (in McGoldrick, "God or Caesar? Life or Death?):

"Not only is that person guilty of violating this commandment who does the evil that it forbids, but also the one who fails to take the opportunity to do good to his neighbor and who, though able to prevent evil and to protect, shield and save the neighbor from injury and bodily harm, fails to do so...If you see someone condemned to die or in similar peril and fail to rescue him, although you know ways and means of doing so, then you have killed him...For you did withhold your love from him and robbed him of the help that might have saved his life."

Response: What Can I Do?

Here are some action steps.

1. *Pray.* Pray for the unborn, the mothers, the fathers, and families in crisis. Pray for wisdom. Pray for God to open doors of opportunity for us to minister the gospel.

2. *Seek ways to help the helpless. Get involved in CRADLE.*

Consider supporting this ministry financially. Obtain the training they offer and become a volunteer counselor or support staff person.

3. *Be a responsible citizen. Register and be an informed voter.* In His providence God has allowed us to live in a land where we have representation in our government. We can make a difference, to a degree, in the morality of our society. Our primary way of making a difference is through personal, holy living. But we can also seek to place men and women into elected positions who will fear God and obey His Word.

4. *Communicate with our elected officials in Washington and Columbus.* Again, we have such a God-given privilege in this land to be able to proclaim the truth of God's Word without fear of reprisal. But it's not only a privilege. It's a responsibility.

You may respond, "What if I don't want to get involved? That's my prerogative, isn't it?" Turn to Proverbs 24:11. "Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter."

Do we have a responsibility to defenseless, unborn children? The Living Bible reads, "Rescue those who are unjustly sentenced to death; don't stand back and let them die. Don't try to disclaim responsibility by saying you didn't know about it."

Verse 12 asks this penetrating question, "If you say, 'But we knew nothing about this,' does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay each person according to what he has done?"

Dear friends, the Bible calls us to have concern, for the baby, for the mother (and father), and for society. But we have an even greater motivation. It's one that should govern our lives. We are not in God's world to live for ourselves. Rather, we are here to...

5. *Live for the honor of God Himself.*

One way to do that is to show in practical ways that we value what He values.

Video (6 minutes): "Life is Sacred"

Ministry Opportunity: CRADLE baby bottles (Donna Clark announcement)

[\[1\]](#) adapted from message delivered at WBC 1/19/03 PM