

SERIES: FAMILY ON PURPOSE
PART 2: WHY LIFE IS SACRED

“Dear friend, I am writing to you as someone who has been where you are: deciding whether to abort or carry your baby. At the tender age of eighteen, I made a decision that would dramatically alter the rest of my life: I had an abortion. I would like to share with you all the things I wish I had known before I made the tragic decision.

I wish I had the wisdom to carefully examine the decision to abort and what it would not only cost me, but also cost the baby I was carrying. I made a decision out of fear: fear of rejection, fear of condemnation, fear of pregnancy, and fear of being alone. When we make a decision out of fear, we are completely self-focused. But this decision was not just about my life, but the life of my first child. I later realized that it was a decision that also affected the father of that baby as well as the baby’s future siblings. One life touches so many.

I wish I would have known how much I already loved my baby. I was intimately connected to him and didn’t fully realize it until the moment he was gone. You see, God has designed every woman to nurture and protect her children, not to kill them.

My suffering for the loss of that baby began immediately following the abortion. I allowed myself to believe a lie, that I was making a decision about a “pregnancy,” not whether

my child would live or die. I further allowed myself to believe that my baby wasn't really a baby yet. I had my abortion when I was just 6 weeks along, but I did not know that my baby's heart was beating at between 100 and 160 beats per minute, and that his own blood was already coursing through his own body as all of his organs were forming. I allowed myself to believe the lie that my baby was only a clump of tissue, because believing the truth would be unthinkable.

Having an abortion almost destroyed my life. The loneliness I felt when my baby was gone was almost unbearable. I cried every day...for years. I became depressed and started experiencing headaches due to the tremendous guilt and anguish I experienced over what I had done. God did step in and heal me emotionally, physically, and spiritually when I repented and turned to Him for forgiveness. However, thirty-three years later, having raised four beautiful children that God so mercifully blessed me with, I can tell you that not a day goes by that I don't think of my first child that I aborted. Every year I remember the day and month he was aborted and on his world-have-been birth month, I imagine how old he would be.

I can never undo taking his life through abortion, but I can use his short life here on Earth in my womb as a testimony that his life mattered. My hope is that through our story, you will see how much your baby's life matters to you and to all the lives he will have the opportunity to touch if you allow him to live. As a fellow mother, I want to help you

understand why the pro-life message of the Bible is scientifically and philosophically explainable. Then I want to share the symptoms that often times are experienced by women who have had abortions and also the impact on the men whose babies were aborted and that there is forgiveness, salvation, healing, and restoration when a person surrenders their life to Jesus and to the Good News of the Gospel that He came to save us from our sinful ways. There is nothing you have ever done that can separate you from His love, acceptance, forgiveness when you confess your sin and your need for Him.”

I. What is it that exists in the womb?

“What is the unborn?” takes precedence over all other considerations in this abortion debate. I am heavily indebted to Scott Klusendorf’s two works, **The Case for Life: Equipping Christians to Engage the Culture**, and his **Pro-Life 101: A Step by Step Guide to Making Your Case Persuasively**.

A. “Abortion is a private matter between a woman and her God.”

When this issue is raised in this discussion, I always agree that it is not only private, but it is intensely personal, usually more personal than the woman and the man who are contemplating an abortion or who have had one admit. But do we allow parents to abuse their children as long as they do so in the privacy of their own home? Of course not. Clearly

privacy isn't the issue, but "What is the unborn?" Church, if the unborn is a human person, it deserves the same protection other children do.

B. "Many poor women cannot afford another child."

This could be true, but when human beings become expensive, may we kill them? What would we think of a mother who killed a toddler who was taxing the family budget? You might object and say that the unborn aren't human like those toddlers. But all you have done is make my point: The relevant issue isn't economic hardship, but "What is the unborn?"

C. "If abortion is restricted, women will die from back-alley abortions."

This rational makes sense if the unborn are not human. Why subject women to such a dangerous operation? But if a human child is involved, why should the law be faulted for making it riskier for someone to kill an innocent human being? Should we legalize bank robbery so that it is safer for felons? As abortion advocate Mary Anne Warren points out, **"The fact that restricting access to abortion has tragic side effects does not, in itself, show that the restrictions are unjustified, since murder is wrong regardless of the consequences of forbidding it."** Again, friends, the issue isn't safety, but, "What is the unborn?"

D. “Women should not be forced to have an unwanted child.”

The homeless are largely unwanted; may we kill them? Again, the issue isn't unwantedness, but, “What is the unborn?”

E. “You shouldn't force your morality on women.”

When someone says this to you, you can ask, “But isn't the mother who aborts forcing her morality on her unborn child?” “That's not fair,” you say. “In each of these examples you're assuming the unborn are human like other children.” “And, you are assuming they are not,” is my reply. So, you see, the issue is not forcing morality, economic hardship, back-alley abortions, privacy, or unwantedness, but simply, “What is the unborn?” That is the only question that matters. Nancy Pearcey writes in her marvelous book, and I recommend that you read this book as soon as you can, **“The core question in abortion, then, is the status of the human body. Is the human body an integral part of the person, sharing in its dignity? Or is it extrinsic to the person—a piece of matter that we can control and manipulate any way we want, like driving a car? To support abortion by sheer logic, we must decide that human life in its earliest stages has no real value—so little that it may be killed for any reason. Then we must decide that at some later stage it is transformed into a different kind of being, of such high value that killing it is murder.”**

II. Human life is a continuum beginning at conception and ending at natural birth

What this means, church, is that you did not come from a zygote, you once were a zygote. You did not evolve from a fetus, you once were a fetus. This position is both scientifically and philosophically sound.

A. The pro-life position is scientifically sound

Friends there is no longer any doubt that individual human life begins at conception. Klusendorf, quoting Dr. Landrum Shettles, the first scientist to achieve conception in a test tube, writes that “...**conception not only confers life, it ‘defines’ life.**”

1. The unborn entity is genetically distinct from its parents

Klusendorf writes, “**Unlike sperm and ovum, the zygote possesses that active capacity to develop into an embryo, fetus, infant, child, and adult. True, sperm and egg are human cellular material, but left to themselves, they will never become a human being. But the zygote already has what is needed to function as a self-integrated human being. Hence, what actually comes into existence at conception is not a ‘fertilized egg’ (sperm and ovum cease to be at conception) or a mere clump of human cells, but a distinct, united, self-integrating human organism. All genetic material needed to drive the unborn’s**

development is there. That is to say, at no point does the distinct organism that came into being undergo a ‘substantial change’ or change of nature. It is human and will remain so. It is an immature human, as is an infant, but a human being nonetheless.” Gregg Koukl writes, “Living things do not become entirely different creatures in the process of changing their form. Rather, they develop according to a certain physical pattern precisely because of the kind of being they already are.” As Beckwith says, “The unborn, therefore, is not a potential human, but a human with great potential.” Koukl writes, “Living things do not change from one kind of being into another over time. They only change their form. What they are stays the same.” Scientifically, we know from conception on that fetus is a human being who will fulfill its full human potential that God has placed in them at conception. Church, with every advance of science, it becomes more evident that to be pro-life is to be on the side of science and reason. Pearcey writes, “Scientists recently discovered that when a sperm meets an egg, an explosion of tiny sparks erupts from the egg at the exact moment of conception. Scientists have even captured these astonishing fireworks on film.” Sarah Knapton writes, “To see the zygote radiate out in a burst from each human egg was breathtaking,” researchers said. Human life literally begins in a bright flash of light.

2. The unborn entity has human parents

Koukl writes, “**The law of Biogenesis states that each living thing reproduces after its own kind. In other words, dogs give birth to dogs. Cats birth cats. To find out what something is you simply ask, ‘What are its parents?’ The law of biogenesis says human parents can only produce human offspring from conception.**”

B. The pro-life position is philosophically sound

The unborn differs from the newborn, but they are not morally relevant. Stephen Schwarz in the oral question of abortion uses the acronym SLED:

1. Size

The unborn are smaller than newborns but size has nothing to do with the rights that people have. Men are generally larger than women, does that mean they deserve more rights? Of course not. Is Shaquille O’ Neal more of a person than feminist Gloria Steinem simply because he is larger? Clearly size is not the issue.

2. Level of development

It is true that the unborn are less developed than newborns, but this too is morally irrelevant. A newborn, for that matter, is less developed than a toddler. A toddler is less developed than an adolescent and so on. But we speak of all as equally human. Is a child of four, for example, less of a person because he or she has not yet developed sexually? Should we

kill a handicapped child whose brain function is less than that of a newborn? These absurd conclusions follow from defining persons based on what they can do rather than what they are. As Klusendorf argues, **“The ability to perform human functions is not a necessary condition for human personhood. Rather, a person is one with the natural, inherent capacity to give rise to personal acts—even if he or she lacks the current ability to perform those acts. People who are temporarily unconscious do not have the present capacity to perform personal acts. We don’t kill them because of it. Nor should we kill the unborn.”**

3. Environment

Dear friends, just because the unborn is located in a different place, does the change in location change a non-human entity into a human one? Did any of you this morning stop being human when you walked from your house to your car to your kitchen to church today? Of course not. The truth is where one is has no bearing on who one is. Koukl gives the example of a baby girl named Rachel who was born at less than six months into the pregnancy. At birth she weighed less than a pound and could fit into the palm of your hand. The hospital staff worked heroically to save her life, and now she is a healthy toddler. But let’s assume that instead of saving baby Rachel’s life at 24 weeks, the doctor came into her room and killed her while she was resting in her father’s hand. We would consider that an outrage. But, did you know, friends, that the same baby Rachel, that very same baby girl, can be killed through legalized abortion through all nine months of

pregnancy simply because she is located six inches away in her mother's womb? Church, this is ludicrous. This is barbaric. You do not stop being human simply because you have a different address.

4. Degree of dependency

If viability is what makes one human, then all those dependent on kidney machines, heart pace-makers, and insulin would have to be declared non-persons. Bernard Nathanson argues, "There is no ethical difference between an unborn child who is plugged into and dependent upon its mother and a kidney patient who is plugged into and dependent upon a kidney machine. We can see that an unborn child differs from a newborn child in only four ways. Size, level of development, environment, and degree of dependency. None of these are valid reasons for disqualifying the unborn as fully human.

III. Symptoms of post-abortion stress that women and men can experience

A. Emotional symptoms

Guilt. Unable to receive Christ's forgiveness. Emotionally numb. Shame. Sorrow. Unworthiness. Self-condemnation. Feels degraded/debased. Anger. Depression. Anxiety. Loneliness. Bitterness. Confusion. Fears God's punishment. Fears/dreams about losing a child. Remorse. Grief. Hopelessness. Helplessness. Rage. Anguish. Panic.

Frustration. Feels exploited. Self-hatred. Despair. Regret. Feels rejected. Horror. Flashbacks and or nightmares. Fears another pregnancy. Fears infertility. Fears failure.

B. Behavioral changes

Secretive. Abusive. Withdrawn. Over-protective of living children. Avoids baby reminders. Marital stress. Crying spells. Sleep disturbances. Develops eating disorders. Self-punishing and or self-degrading behavior. Alcohol and or drug abuse. Wants atonement\replacement child. Changes in relationships. Difficulty with all types of intimacy. Loss of interest in sex. Promiscuity or frigidity. Suicidal impulses. Tolerates abusive relationships. Reduced motivation. Loss of normal sources of pleasure. Divides time into “before” and “after” the abortion. Damaged relationships with living children.

IV. Why life is sacred and must be protected

A. God created the human family in His image

Genesis 1:27-28 says, “So God created human beings in His own image. In the image of God He created them; male and female He created them. ²⁸Then God blessed them and said, ‘Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.’”

B. God's love extends to all humans including those not born

Psalm 139:13-16, “You made all the delicate inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb.

¹⁴Thank You for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.

¹⁵You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. ¹⁶You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in Your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day has passed.” (Betty please come and stand by me now)

Jeremiah 1:4-5, “The Lord gave me this message: ⁵‘I knew you before I formed you in your mother’s womb. Before you were born, I set you apart and appointed you as My prophet to the nations.’”

Luke 1:41-45, “At the sound of Mary’s greeting, Elizabeth’s child leaped within her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴²Elizabeth gave a glad cry and exclaimed to Mary, ‘God has blessed you above all women, and your child is blessed. ⁴³Why am I so honored, that the mother of my Lord should visit me? ⁴⁴When I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. ⁴⁵You are blessed because you believed that the Lord would do what He said.” (Betty gives her testimony.)