

Transcript 102-1

Shea Houdmann

Welcome to Got Questions podcast. Today's episode we're going to be covering an issue that's been in the news a lot lately but need not just lately really for the past several decades it's been an issue that Christians are struggling with, and that's the issue of abortion. And today we want to cover primarily what does the Bible say about abortion?

Shea Houdmann

So joining me today is Kevin, our managing editor, and Jeff, the administrator of bibleref.com. So we're going to be trying to give a what is a biblical perspective on the issue of what does the Bible say about abortion? For me the most interesting part of this discussion is that the Bible nowhere explicitly mentions abortion. There's no occurrence in the Bible of a woman intentionally going to have the baby in her terminated without being born. This does not occur in the Bible, but with that said, there are a lot of principles that for me at least and for Jeff and Kevin as well, thoroughly convince us that God is opposed to abortion other than perhaps in the most extremely rare cases where the only way to save the life of the mother is for the baby to be removed early, essentially causing its death. But well, we'll get into that a little bit more later, but Jeff, won't you start us off and what for you is the biblical evidence that you think that leads you to be against abortion, or more accurately, pro life?

Jeff Laird

I think where you started with there is actually a good place to start. Is be very clear about what we're talking about and what we're not. So when we talk about abortion, we're not talking about an effort to attempt to save at least one life involved. So a woman who has a miscarriage or a fetus who passes away or something like an ectopic pregnancy where there's an effort being made to preserve a woman's health without making any deliberate effort to kill somebody, that is not abortion. Abortion is when you make a deliberate choice to kill, to terminate, to end the life of the unborn child. So when people referred to so-called medically necessary abortions, there are nurses, there are doctors, their OB GYN's, who will say, strictly speaking, that's never the case. You can always do something to try to save the life of the unborn even if you know it's probably not going to be successful.

Jeff Laird

So everything that we're talking about today, we're really talking about those deliberate efforts. A purposeful choice to end the life of the child, and there are a lot of things in Scripture to give us principles that we can look at. We do see the idea in the Bible that the unborn are human. We see the same terminology used for unborn persons as we see for born persons. We see concepts in the Old Testament that talk about if a woman gives birth prematurely, that's one thing. If there's some sort of harm because of what happens, that's a different thing.

Jeff Laird

We see in scripture that all human life is equal. There's a consistent thread in the Bible that tells us that we are not supposed to distinguish between people in terms of their value to God. Their moral value in the terms that are often used when it comes to abortion, and some of those things do spill over into a

secular sense, but basically what we're looking at is that the Bible's definitions give us the idea that the unborn are human, that all human beings have intrinsic rights, that they have intrinsic value and that murder, which again, to be carefully defined, we're talking about deliberately killing somebody who is innocent. Purposefully choosing to take a life. That those things are wrong. And there's more details that we have behind those, but that's the broad strokes of what Scripture says about why the idea of abortion, even if it's not explicitly mentioned does come with biblical concepts that we should be able to use.

Kevin Stone

On this whole issue, sometimes the position of the Christian gets framed as you know we are anti this or anti that. We're always framed as taking the the negative position we're the naysayers, but I I really like to actually say what we're for. We use the term pro-life, and there are many reasons why we are pro life, why we support the the life of the mother, and the life of the baby that she carries. And I have a few reasons right here that I've listed as to why we are pro-life and that first one is that life is a gift from God.

Kevin Stone

Jesus taught John Chapter 5 that the father has life in himself and he goes on to say that the Son also has life in Himself. God is the source of life. He is the sustainer of life. When God made Adam the first man, he formed that body first of all. And then he gave he gave that body life through a special work that only God could do. He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living being. Genesis 2 and verse 7 all of God's gifts should be cherished and the gift of life is one that we should cherish.

Kevin Stone

Christians are pro life. Also we are pro life because we believe that life begins at conception. There are many resources available where medical science backs up this this biblical idea as well. Also, many passages of scripture that indicate that life begins at conception. One of my favorites. This is one of my go to passages anymore when I'm discussing this subject. Is Exodus 21. This is part of the Mosaic law, and in this particular passage the law uses as an illustration the early termination of a pregnancy and the passage goes like this, this is verses 22 and 23 where the law of Moses gives equal protection to the pregnant woman and to the child that she carries. And I, I'll read this here, that this is from the New Living Translation. Now suppose two men are fighting, and in the process they accidentally strike a pregnant woman so she gives birth prematurely. If no further injury results, in other words, the baby is born alive and it's healthy, and the mother suffers no injury as well, no lasting injury. The man who struck the woman must pay the amount of compensation the woman's husband demands and the judges approve. But if there is further injury, that is to either the woman or to the fetus. The punishment shall match the injury. A life for a life. So basic to this particular statute in the mosaic law is the idea that the baby is a person even prior to birth, and that that particular baby has the same rights and protections under the law as an adult human being.

Kevin Stone

So according to this law if somebody causes the death of an unborn child, well, that's a serious crime, and the punishment must fit the crime. It must be a life for a life. Now if the consequence of the men

fighting was only that there was some type of a an impermanent injury to the woman or to the baby, then the offender would pay a fine, determined by the judges and the and the husband of the woman. But if a life was lost then that person's life had to be forfeit as well, he would also lose his life. So equal protection for the fetus, and so that's the biblical principle, and I think that particular passage in Exodus 21 is just crystal clear.

Kevin Stone

There are other reasons why we are pro-life that is, human life bears the image of God. Life is a gift, and human life is unique in that God made us in his own image and in his own likeness, Genesis 2:27. This gives us an inherent dignity and value in human life. So, as marvelous as other parts of creation are, human life just outstrips at all. Outclasses all other of God's creations. We are fearfully and wonderfully made. Christians are pro life because we bear the image of God.

Kevin Stone

Also, there's a biblical principle that we find all the way through scripture and that is that the innocent should be protected. Taking up the cause of the innocent and protecting those who cannot fend for themselves, we see that all the way through scripture. It's hard to imagine anyone more in need of protection, less able of self defense than a baby in the womb. So Christians are pro-life because they've got a moral responsibility to protect the weak, to protect the innocent.

Kevin Stone

Also, God has plans for every individual. God told the prophet Jeremiah in Jeremiah, one in verse five 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 nation. So God did the forming of Jeremiah, but even before that forming took place, Jeremiah was known, he was set apart, and he was appointed. So Christians are pro life because we don't believe there are any accidents or mistakes in God's plan.

Kevin Stone

Everyone has the right to live. Another reason why Christians are pro life. Life being a gift from God means that nobody but God has that right to take that life away. So life is a basic human right. Probably the the most basic right that people have. We don't want to play God and that makes us Pro life and also what God thinks is most important, we're informed by truth, not by social pressure or by the changing political tides or human opinion, but we we find truth in God's word and what God says is most important of all, and that takes precedence over everything else.

Shea Houdmann

Yeah Kevin, I really like how you frame it and that I think Christians need to, in addition to presenting an anti abortion message, I think that is crucially important. We are against abortion because we think it is wrong. I think it is dishonoring to God. We think it is the terminating of an innocent life, but to also remember that Christians are pro-life. We are anti abortion because we are pro life and to me the human beings being created in the image of God is the linchpin of the whole thing. That there's a reason why.

Shea Houdmann

Recently some friends of ours had to make the choice of terminating their dog who was pregnant with puppies that and to terminate the puppies, but. 'cause there were serious problems that were happening and they felt really, really guilty about it. And I had to share them look, there is a difference between humanity and every other creation on earth. That this is humanity. It's in the image of God and every human being, whether from the moment of conception, we believe bears God's image and is therefore of inherent value and worth and that life is worth protecting, worth saving, worth being allowed to develop and live. And so to me, that's the focus. But again, I I totally get it that abortion to us is such a unnecessary evil that we see running so rampant in the country that its so easy to be so focused on being against it that we fail to communicate why we're so much against it. And then, at the points that you just outlined, we're very, very good at doing that.

Jeff Laird

It is important for us to remember that Christians are not just anti abortion in the sense that that's all we care about. Then one of the criticisms, that's made is very dishonest and that's to say that Christians don't care what happens to women or children after birth. We've done a podcast in this podcast series talking about things like crisis pregnancy centers, where women can go to get resources that involve things like financial aid, and education, and assistance with housing, and training, and diapers, and formula, and all sorts of things, adoption services, and so on and so forth are very often driven by pro-life causes.

Jeff Laird

So when we hear people try to talk about this as though Christians are just anti abortion and don't care what happens after, that's not true. I agree that we want to be careful not to just talk about abortion and not talk about what we want to do to support women who are struggling or children who are struggling. But we we should be willing and able to push back on the attitude that Christians just are not in favor of helping people before, during, and after pregnancy.

Kevin Stone

I'm glad you bring that up, Jeff. My wife and I have been involved in crisis pregnancy centers and we have personally opened our home too who were at the time complete strangers, who were girls who were in crisis pregnancy and had them in our home. And we we gave them the shelter and the the resources that they needed. And so we were. We are personally invested in in helping the women involved in these situations, and because we we love them. We love the babies and we we love Jesus.

Kevin Stone

Jesus said couple different occasions. I am the life says that John 11 again in John 14 and so to love Jesus is to love life. Now he is life himself and so yes, we love people at every stage of development, from from, from womb to tomb, as they sometimes say.

Jeff Laird

But you saying that our love for people is not dependent on development is also really important. One of the criticisms that we sometimes hear when we discuss this is that our stance as Pro life on abortion is purely religious. That it is entirely rooted in a religious belief, and for that reason it needs to be left out of any sort of law or any sort of discussion in certain categories. And there again, that's not true.

Now, beyond the question of whether or not laws are based on moral principles and they all are, there are reasons that we can give that make a lot of sense. That lead a lot of secular persons, non Christians, even atheists to be pro-life and to oppose the concept of abortion.

Jeff Laird

I think the one of the best summaries that I've seen comes from another fellow ministry called Stand to Reason, and they've developed and promoted something called a sled test s-l-e-d, and I don't want to steal all of their thunder but the idea behind that is that we should not try to define personhood whether or not somebody has basic human rights such as the right to live based on those four characteristics. One of which is size. Toddlers, infants, unborn children are not as large as fully formed adults. We don't therefore say, well, they're smaller. So when you hear people say, well, it's just a tiny clump of cells that's irrelevant to whether or not somebody is truly a person, truly human. There's level of development. A preteen child is not sexually mature. There are aspects of their body and their biology that are not completely formed and completely developed. We don't deny them personhood on that basis. There's environment. The child in the womb is vulnerable. It's not outside in the world, but neither is an astronaut in space. Neither is a scuba diver who's in the middle of the ocean. The environment that we put somebody in does not somehow remove their personhood.

Jeff Laird

And then there's level of dependency and dependency is the idea that just because somebody needs other persons in order to survive once again, should not remove their personhood. Persons who've been in accidents, infants again very, very young children are also dependent, so I that's a good thing for people to to look at into research. The point being that things like the sled test, size, level of development, environment, dependency, those things are not necessarily tied to some explicitly biblical or Christian idea, and the reason that's valuable is because we can point out that all truth is God's truth. The ideas that lead a person to a pro life view are fundamental to what we, as human beings, think about humanity. This is not some long drawn out convoluted conclusion that only comes through theology. This is a very basic concept that we should be able to get to when we talk about humanity and human rights and what it means to be human. It is not explicitly something that has to come from the Bible, but it is very clearly something that comes from the general idea of what it means to be human.

Shea Houdmann

Excellent point, Jeff I too am a fan of Stand to Reason and their sled analogy. I think it's very very useful. So if the purpose of this episode is to talk about what does the Bible say about abortion, again, from the very outset, I said the Bible does not explicitly mention abortion, but what it does mention is that God values life. That Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. God is the creator of life and guarding humanity. We're created in the image of God. From the moment we are conceived we have value because we're created in the image of God and that as Kevin, outlined with the Exodus passage that God prescribes the same penalty on someone who ends the life of a baby in the womb as someone who commits murder. Just showing how God values human beings from the moment they are conceived. In many other scripture passages, we could go to.

Shea Houdmann

But maybe for the conclusion of this episode let's just talk briefly about for people who have had an abortion and what does the Bible say about them? Some some regret at some deal with tremendous guilt for the rest of their lives about it. So maybe Kevin once you start us off as a as a pastor when someone has had an abortion, how can they find God's forgiveness? How can they receive God's forgiveness and not have to deal with that guilt 'cause we want to point out that abortion is not an unforgivable sin. It is not something that a permanent scarlet letter, so to speak, in your life that you are of no value to God or that God is continually angry with you or that God will not forgive you and they have a very important point, but so many women and husbands or men who have encouraged their wives or girlfriends to get an abortion feel extremely guilty. So what does the Bible say about that aspect of the abortion issue?

Kevin Stone

I would encourage anyone who is experiencing guilt over having an abortion in the past to understand that God's grace is greater than any sin that we could ever commit. God's grace. We can't. I can't even describe it. We cannot wrap our heads around the magnitude of God's grace, his blessings to those who who don't deserve his blessings. That's the definition of grace. And we have passages that we can cling to First John 1:9 if we confess our sins, He, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. We've got passages all the way through scripture that talk about the forgiveness of God is abundant forgiveness. His free forgiveness in Christ. Christ paid the penalty and we in Christ can find that forgiveness. Find the freedom that that gives us to to move forward in life to take that next step and just to let God take care of those, those burdens. It may take may take some counseling. It may take some, some working through different issues with with some Godly, wise counsel, but you have the Word of God, the promises of God, and His grace is available in Christ.

Jeff Laird

I think that we as believers need to carefully understand that in the vast majority of all cases, women who have had abortions are victims. In other words, they have been fooled, tricked, deceived, mistreated by a system that is lying to them about what all of this means and what the value of life is and what their options are, and what they can or cannot do. There is an element in the world that wants to look at, you know, post abortive women with a level of judgment and that's you can understand where some of that comes from. But that's not really the Christian response as Kevin was saying, Christ's grace is sufficient for anything and everything, and that's especially important to keep in mind when we remember that so much of what comes from the pro abortion or pro choice movement it's lies, it's propaganda. There's statements and concepts and ideas that don't even hold up to themselves. They don't make sense of morality. They don't make sense of human nature, but there's this tremendous pressure that women are put under and they are fooled, they're lied to, they're deceived into doing these things. So it's important for us to remember that women who have been through this experience we know from an objective standpoint, they suffer physical, emotional, psychological, after effects from it spiritually.

Jeff Laird

We have to recognize that women who have been through this are victims of what's happened and our response as believers needs to understand that and accept that. We don't want a person who's been through that experience to think that the Christian approach is to condemn them or to look down on

them, or to spit on them in some way. It really is the opposite. My view of a woman who says this is something I have done or that I have chosen is sadness and sympathy because she has chosen to do something because of lies and because of deception and because of an unfair treatment. I really, truly think we need to remember that women who have experienced abortion are victims clearly not in the same sense as the unborn child who's actually lost a life, but they are no less validly called victims because of what this means and what it does.

Shea Houdmann

Excellent point Jeff, and I think to me that's the key to all of this is that we are strongly pro-life at Got Questions that are we are not a ministry that focuses exclusively on abortion by any stretch, but we are unashamedly pro-life and anti abortion because we believe that's what the Word of God teaches in terms of the the value of life. The human beings being created in the image of God. There are multiple reasons why we are firmly convinced that abortion is a horrendous sin in the vast, vast majority of cases.

Shea Houdmann

But with that said, we are also a ministry that focuses on declaring the gospel. That forgiveness is available through faith in Jesus Christ. So any and every sin that we have any of us have committed is forgivable. So no matter where you are on this issue, whether you've had an abortion, whether you encourage someone to get an abortion or whether you performed an abortion, God can and will forgive you. You place your faith in Jesus Christ, trusting his sacrifice on the cross as the full penalty for your sins. Your sins will be covered. They will be forgiven. You'll be cleansed and we promise an eternity in heaven.

Shea Houdmann

So we want to conclude this particular episode with the message of hope. In that with the millions of people who have been a part of the abortion industry for lack of a better word. Forgiveness is available through Jesus Christ and may we conclude on that point.

Shea Houdmann

So this has been the first episode in a brief series we're going to do on abortion issues cause its such a hot topic. Part 2 is going to be on Roe versus Wade because there's some news in the headlines where it looks like Roe versus Wade might be overturned by the Supreme Court, so we'll be discussing a little bit of the history and what it would mean if it happens, and how Christians should respond and so forth. So stay tuned for part two of our discussion on abortion. So I hope this conversation has been beneficial. Encouraging to you. That we pray that it has been. Feel free to submit any questions you have about abortion to us at gotquestions.org. So got questions? Bible has answers. We'll help you find them.