

## Transcript 103-1

MeLissa Houdmann

Hello and welcome to the Got Questions podcast. My name is MeLissa and I'm here today with two of my Got Questions coworkers and dear friends, Beth and Gwen. Welcome to our continuing series on abortion and pro life issues. Today we're going to answer some questions from Got Questions readers. Maybe you're one of them regarding why a Christian should be pro-life.

MeLissa Houdmann

All right, our first question we're going to tackle today is, I keep hearing Roe V Wade in the news, but I don't know what they're talking about. Can you fill me in on why this even matters and why should I care? This all happened before I was born. Well, I hate to tell you well, maybe it's good that I tell you, but this happened before I was born too, so we're gonna give this question to Beth because she was born during this time.

Beth DeVore

That's an excellent idea. I was three at the time, and so I was very up to date on the issues of the day. No, but I did want to know more about the context so I looked it up and I'm nowhere near a legal expert, so do your own research. Roe V Wade was about abortion rights and the woman in question, her lawyers used the 14th Amendment to try to prove that she had the right to an abortion.

Beth DeVore

The 14th Amendment says no state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States, nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law, nor denied to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Beth DeVore

So in this case, the court considered 3 aspects relevant to due process of the law. The first was the woman's right to privacy. The second was the woman health that is, what were the chances that the woman would be more likely to die during an abortion versus during childbirth, and then finally the fetus viability. The chance that the baby would survive outside outside the womb with help, of course. So the court decision broke up accessibility support to abortion into three different categories based on trimester. In the first trimester, the woman's privacy was paramount. And she and her doctor had the right to choose abortion. Because at the time the medical data suggested that a woman was more likely to die in childbirth than during an abortion in the first trimester. During the second trimester, the woman's health was primary. So the woman and the doctor had to figure out which would be more likely for her to die during an abortion or to die because of an extenuating circumstance such as ectopic pregnancy. And during the third trimester the fetuses viability came into play because the state has a vested interest in protecting the potentiality of human life, and they had to also consider the health of the mother.

Beth DeVore

The second issue regarding the 14th amendment is the identity and definition of person. The mother is obviously a person. She's grown up human beings walking around, but the court refused to admit that the fetus was life before a live birth. The fetus is not a person within the language and the meaning of the 14th Amendment so their life and liberty are not protected under the Constitution, although again, this state's interest in the potentiality of life should be considered.

MeLissa Houdmann

Wow, Beth thank you. I learned some things there. I appreciate that very much. Did you study for that?

Beth DeVore

I did, at least at least two hours.

MeLissa Houdmann

You don't remember it. I don't remember it from when you were three. All right, the second question. Uhm, this kind of goes right with what you were talking about. It says, my professor says that the law says an unborn child is not a person. What does the Bible say?

Gwen Sellers

I would love to take that one.

MeLissa Houdmann

OK, good.

Gwen Sellers

I will have a lot to say about this, it's very clear. So I just I have some verses for you and I will just read them. Right out of the Bible. So this is Psalm 139:13- 16, says for 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. You 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. So very clearly child in the womb.

MeLissa Houdmann

I love that.

Gwen Sellers

Jeremiah 1:5 says, Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you and appointed you a prophet to the nation. Then we get into the New Testament with John the Baptist. So in Luke 1:15, John's parents, his father, I think was told that he would be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And in Luke 1: 44 we see John the Baptist in utero leaped for joy when Mary presumably with Jesus in utero enters the room. So clearly those children are children and then you see Paul in Galatians 1:15 it says, but when he who had set me apart before I was

born, so there's very clearly this theme of God knows people before they were born, so they are people in the womb.

MeLissa Houdmann

That's great and good. I'm sure you could go on and on about that right. For a long time.

Gwen Sellers

Yeah, yeah, I mean, there's so much more even though just thinking back to Genesis. You know when we talk about God made man and woman in his image. So if you're a human, you are made in God's image and you're human in utero. So you are you are a person valued by God made in his image.

MeLissa Houdmann

Yeah, and I think I think the previous podcast the guys talked a lot about that, so if you haven't watched that I would encourage you to go back and listen to that podcast and they had a great discussion about that. All right. Beth, I think this question is for you. OK, this is a good one. Christians believe that life starts at conception, but when does that life become a person?

Beth DeVore

I'm going to go to Star Trek.

MeLissa Houdmann

Oh dear. We're not surprised. Are we Gwen, yeah.

Beth DeVore

Star Trek the next generation. They had an Android named Data and they had an episode where Starfleet wanted to take him apart and see how he ticked and he didn't want to be taken apart and eventually it came to a court case and eventually the judge said the problem is I don't know if you have a soul. And if you do, I can't take that risk. And she gave Data his his autonomy, his freedom, and that's true for us too. We can't look inside the womb and see when the developing baby receives the soul theologically the Orthodox Christian belief is that the soul comes at conception and there's two different theories about how that happens. Traducianism ...

MeLissa Houdmann

Nice word, Beth. Nice word.

Beth DeVore

I have no idea if I pronounce that right?

MeLissa Houdmann

I think you're right, Traducianism.

Beth DeVore

It says the parents create the soul at the moment the bodies created when the egg is fertilized. And creationism says God creates the soul at conception. So either way, the baby gets the soul at conception and there's no way to say that you can have a soul and not be a person. And like with Data, there's no way to disprove it.

Beth DeVore

There is one controversy in the Bible that abortion advocates like to bring up. Genesis 9:6, right after the flood God tells Noah that any person who kills another should be killed because whoever sheds human blood by humans, their blood be shed for the image of God has God made mankind. So then you go to Exodus 21:22 through 25 and it's talking about if the men fight and hit a pregnant woman and her child is born prematurely but there is no serious injury he will surely be punished in accordance with what the woman's husband will put on him and he will pay what the court decides.

Beth DeVore

But if there is serious injury then you will give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot and so on. A lot of Bible scholars think that this punishment only refers to if the woman is injured. The text doesn't actually say that. There's no reason to think that if the baby dies, then the man who struck the woman won't be considered that he was involved in manslaughter on the baby and not just woman. And honestly rabbis have talked about this for thousands of years, and it seems every rabbi has three different opinions. But just taking it from the text, there's no reason to think that the the baby is not protected by this law.

MeLissa Houdmann

That's very interesting. Thanks Beth. That's an interesting study into that passage. OK, are you guys ready for another one? OK, let's see what this says. How can I respond to people who claim my body, my right. How is that the wrong way to look at this? And I would love it, if I could give up the 1st. And yeah, you guys can please fill in what, what you how you would like to respond. But I think it's interesting that the biblical worldview would say that an unborn fetus isn't part of the mother's body. The Bible presents the unborn baby a whole person, another person, a whole other person from the point of conception. So in contrast to that, the law addresses this difference with the concept of viability, which Beth mentioned earlier in with the Roe V. Wade explanation. So at what point in gestation is a human able to live? I mean with help outside the womb? So one of the issues with using viability to determine when abortion is appropriate is that the goal posts keep moving. And aren't we glad they have because like in way back in the 40s, a 26 and 1/2 ounce baby would rarely survive, but by like the early 90s, 85% of those babies survived, aren't we so thankful that that guidepost has moved?

MeLissa Houdmann

So you know, neonatal care really started improving in the 1970s, and that was really the same time frame as Roe V Wade. And so that whole study of that connection is really interesting. You know, in the late 70s I was born, I'll let you do the math real quick in your head. I was I was hospitalized for several weeks because I was very premature and but you know if I would have been born today with a similar condition as I had then, I probably would only spend a couple days in the hospital and they'd send me home. Just a decade before I was born, the Kennedys, President Kennedy had a baby, just a decade before and that baby passed away from the same thing that I survived 10 years later. So the world is a

very different place than it was even when I was born 45 years ago. It's a different place and so that that goalpost has continually changed, so anybody else have any thing to say about that question?

Beth DeVore

Yeah, I recently read that according to Roe V Wade, you know the second trimester into 26 weeks and that's when they started considering the viability of the child. But today 50% of babies born at 24 weeks are expected to survive. And recently, I believe that the little boy survived at 21 weeks. Which is amazing.

MeLissa Houdmann

So like everybody has a has worth, right? No matter how old they are. And I think that's that's a really distinctive thing that the Bible really makes clear.

Beth DeVore

And we don't know where the potential for life begins.

MeLissa Houdmann

Yeah, I mean, does viability even play a role now that we know these things?

Gwen Sellers

And I think just in terms of my body, my choice I, I mean the fetus is a separate body. And I mean, I've never been pregnant. But I have you know a ton of friends who have been my I have 5 nephews and the mom can feel it. I mean when you feel the baby kicking, that's because it's a different body kicking and I would need to look up all the medical stuff about this, but you know, like mom and baby can have different blood types or like and certain diseases don't pass. I mean that's the whole thing with like the placenta and the walls and the barriers between them, like they very clearly are different distinct bodies. So what a pregnant woman does to her child is not what she's doing to herself. I mean her body is involved as well, but so is the body of another person.

MeLissa Houdmann

You're very good. It's important to remember that we were all made in the image of God, right? Yeah, all right. Should we move on anything else to say about that? All right, oh, this is a good one, Gwen. I think I think given your family, I think if you could take this one, I think that would be interesting for our listeners to hear it. My friend has a genetic disease. If she gets pregnant, is it OK for her to abort the child?

Gwen Sellers

Yeah, OK, so to give you some background on my family. My dad has Huntington's disease which is a degenerative neurological disorder. He was diagnosed in his 60s and that means. So it's genetically passed, so my sister and I were both at risk for having it and my sister at that point had two children. And she got tested and she is gene positive and which means that she will also develop this disease. So at that point she and her husband had to decide would they continue to have children knowing that any child they conceived would have a 50% risk of also inheriting this disease.

Gwen Sellers

I recently talked to my sister about this. They did decide to keep having children, they have 5 total and so, I asked her about that decision and she said that, for her it was really a matter of faith. She could see already, you know we were just like a year I guess into my dad's illness and she could already see the blessings and the way that God was using it for good. And yeah, just a lot of good things coming out of it. And she also knew, you know it's like wow she. valued my dad's life. I value my dad's life. So she's glad he existed. She sees blessings in her life, and you know is glad she exists. But she felt like if she could trust God with this genetic disease, you know, trusts him to use this result of like part of the fall is diseases, right?

Gwen Sellers

So she could trust God to turn this terrible thing into a blessing for my dad. She could trust him to do that for her. She could also then trust him to do that for her children. So she didn't want to withhold her children from God and so therefore decided that they could keep having kids, so yeah, so we don't know, you know if any of them have Huntington's or not, but just that that thought there again of every human life has value and also that God is able to use and to redeem every situation.

MeLissa Houdmann

That's yeah worth has to be grounded in something objective, right?

Gwen Sellers

Yeah, well and actually I mean that's a great point, right? Of where do we draw the line? Thank you for bringing that up. So if we say OK, well, someone with this disability doesn't have worth, or, you know, a baby who's four weeks of gestation doesn't have worth. But a 5 year old does have worth. I mean, where do we draw that line? If I don't care about you in utero, why why should I care about you now? You know if your life matters based on my convenience or based on, you know my circumstance or based on what you can contribute to society, that's just an ever changing target, and it's personal. I mean I might like you know, like person A over here, but I don't like person B. So person B just isn't worth it so yeah you can't I hope that's.

MeLissa Houdmann

I hope that's not me.

Gwen Sellers

You can't just have this moving target as you said worth has to be grounded in something objective. And of course we believe it is. We believe it's grounded and being made in the image of God.

MeLissa Houdmann

Yeah, praise him. I love that. Yeah that's great. I love that that every human is made in his image. It's that if you really live by that, it really changes your perspective on a lot of things. It some of it is really hard. Yeah yeah alright next question, what does it mean to be holistically pro-life? Is it just about abortion or should being pro-life impact other areas of my life? Oh, that's a great question. I love that. OK, who wants to take it?

Gwen Sellers

Well, I mean I can just start with sort of, you know, following up on my family story is I very much believe my dad's life still has value. In fact, we received a question from someone the other day who felt as though she was just taking up space. She has difficulty communicating and difficulty being mobile and so I can't help anyone and I was able to say, well, my dad has Huntington's disease. He comes to church in a wheelchair. But guess what, it's helpful to people, like his presence is encouraging. He's a really great listener. He prays for people.

Gwen Sellers

So even though my dad is limited in his, you know mobility and various other things, his life still has value. He encourages and blesses me and he is also still growing in his own faith and being blessed and enjoying life so yeah, so I guess just that to say if disability certainly does not make one life less valuable.

MeLissa Houdmann

Yeah, I think for me I would really bring out the whole poverty and developing country situation. I think that pro-life issues really speak out to me in that realm. You know, are we providing we as the church we as believers are we providing food for the poor? Or are we providing education for people? You know is our local church or are you personally helping in the the case against poverty? And so I think that is probably where I come in. And of course also, you know helping people, these women who are pregnant need help. I mean, our churches should be first in line, first in line for that and I'm sure we'll talk about that later. But Beth, what about you? What does pro-life holistically mean in your life?

Beth DeVore

Oh it's kind of funny because you know our offices are right upstairs from an autism center and those kids are delightful. They're so yeah, they're just great.

MeLissa Houdmann

I love it when they dress up in costumes and come running up to us to say hello, that's my favorite.

Beth DeVore

I love when I can hear them growling and pretending to be monsters downstairs. And that does bring to mind, people with disabilities. In my life there was a woman in our church in Alabama who was struck with polio. Which was in her 20s and at her 50th anniversary, being in a wheelchair, she called it God's greatest blessing. It didn't slow her down at all. She helped her husband run her business. Everyone in the church loved her. Another friend down in Texas who was diagnosed with Ms at the age of I think she was diagnosed as a teenager but she had symptoms since she was 11. And because of social programs that only began in the last couple years, she was able to go to college and get hearing aids and she just graduated and she wants to be a social worker.

MeLissa Houdmann

Oh praise God that's so great.

Beth DeVore

No one is going to tell me that you know her life wasn't worth living. And then we talked about a friend of ours who goes, has a prison ministry. You have to think about the Bible says how many times to visit those in prison. Along with that, we have to think about the justice system. And really ponder, are the making sure that the justice system is fair, that the courts are fair, that punishments are fair. And my friend Alan, who I interviewed earlier. Hopefully we're going to have a whole podcast on immigration and refugees. That's really his heart and I can't wait to hear more about that.

Beth DeVore

And finally, for me trafficking victims. We have to consider trafficking victims. Only recently are authorities starting to crack down on massage parlors. And I just really hope and pray that that that continues and that the church does step up and be more involved in recovery and maybe even rescue a little.

Gwen Sellers

And I, I think what we're really getting at here is it's big picture. It truly is, you know, from womb to tomb as people say. And so it's every aspect in every state of life do we care about those in need with poverty? Are we investing in education? Are we trying to remove, you know, crime from neighborhoods? Are we being just in our social justice system? Do we care about people of all different races and ethnicities? And yeah, and we as with church it's are we in our communities doing that? I mean I can't solve global yeah global poverty or global hunger, but I can support a child from Compassion and I can donate food to my local school for those kids who have food insecurity.

Gwen Sellers

And you know I'm kind of bringing it back to the whole abortion debate is Pro life does mean we care about the mother. We care about the father we're. I mean we care about that unborn baby, but we care about everyone in the entire situation, and so it's how can we best support them and equip them to really be able to live the life that God has intended. Not just how can we make sure this baby survives, but it's how can we support this entire, you know all of the people involved in this situation to truly experience life.

MeLissa Houdmann

Oh that's great. I love that I, I think we have about 3 minutes, so we're going to try to do 1 more question. OK, so we'll just have to keep our answers short. OK, the last question for this episode is what about the mother? Doesn't the woman have rights? Why does the woman have to sacrifice for something she doesn't even want?

Beth DeVore

I was talking about this with another friend earlier. I wish we could reframe it. I wish we could say. This is going to be a hard year, but you are a superhero because you are sacrificing to bring this life into the world and that is worth celebrating.

MeLissa Houdmann

I love that, yeah.

Gwen Sellers

I think that's great and especially you know a lot of women in these types of situations do end up placing their child for adoption. And yeah, and the idea of celebrating birth mothers of you did sacrifice and now you're you're doing this loving thing for your child by placing them in a different home and there are also obviously a ton of women who'd keep that child and raised them. And yeah, I love that. So sometimes no. I'm particularly irked by the fact that sometimes

MeLissa Houdmann

Oh, here she goes no.

Beth DeVore

I'm worse than this.

Gwen Sellers

Advocates spell it as, oh, we're pro women. And it's it's just baffling to me because as a woman, to think that you are celebrating me by saying I would have to kill my child in order to live a good life is just wrong like that. That should not be the best option. And I mean kind of on a broader perspective. It shows me that like what, I'm only valuable if I'm functionally male. I mean, you know the obvious, glaring difference between men and women are women can get pregnant, men cannot. And so by saying, it's women rights to just say, well, we'll let you kill the child so that you can be a male, it's just does not scream Pro women to me. And I think a much better way to be pro women is to support pregnancy. Why don't we, you know, like I, I really enjoy hallmark movies and I appreciate every time that I see a pregnant actress. I mean, you know sometimes it's like well this is a little weird. Like she's very pregnant and falling in love with you know not the father of the child, but I always go way to go Hallmark way to support that woman and allow her to be pregnant and to succeed in her career. Or you know, what about workplaces that provide leave for those prenatal appointments? And or you know, then, on the other side, like, who gives nursing rooms or things like that for women who are breastfeeding, like to me, that's pro women. Let's support women in doing the things that they want to do not say your pregnancy is a problem, so get rid of it. And that's like somehow pro women because it's not.

MeLissa Houdmann

Great comments ladies. I have I want you to know I have this many more questions to answer. How about we continue this conversation in our next episode? Got questions? The Bible has answers, we'll help you find them. Thanks for joining us today.