

Transcript 103-2

MeLissa Houdmann

Hello and welcome to the Got Questions podcast. I'm MeLissa and I'm here today with two of my Got Questions coworkers and my dear friends, Beth and Gwen. Hello ladies.

Beth DeVore

Hey MeLissa.

MeLissa Houdmann

We're continuing our series on abortion and pro-life issues, and today we're going to finish up the questions from that have been submitted by Got Questions readers and some of them from our personal lives regarding why Christian should be pro life and what it means in our everyday life. So if you haven't watched the first episode that we, that we recorded, please do so. Gwyn and Beth did a fantastic job, so you don't want to miss it, so I have questions that have been submitted and should we just jump right in ladies?

Beth DeVore and Gween Sellers

Sure.

MeLissa Houdmann

The first one is, I'm hearing about a potential repeal of Roe versus Wade. What would the repeal actually do? So, Beth, I think you're our expert. So do you want to take that one?

Beth DeVore

If I'm the expert, that's kind of sad, but yes, I researched it and what it will do is absolutely nothing.

MeLissa Houdmann

That was short, you know.

Beth DeVore

That's not completely true. It is not going to suddenly ban all abortions in the country. It is going to remove the federal law so that states have more freedom to develop their own laws and so red states will get more conservative and blue states will allow more abortions to occur. Purple states, hopefully, will have intelligent conversations, but believe it or not since Roe V. Wade politicians, state politicians have been making abortion laws for their states that have not been enacted because Roe V Wade has nullified what they say. So when Roe V Wade is lifted, some of those state laws over the next few months will become active. And I would love to be able to say that those laws are well thought out and well supported and are not just political mongering. But I'm I can't say that and I think things are going to get pretty dang volatile pretty quickly.

MeLissa Houdmann

Yeah, time will tell right. Time will tell.

Beth DeVore

Yeah, and either way we as the Christian community need to respond in ways that show that abortion is not an attractive choice and we need to support those who are looking to get an abortion anyway.

MeLissa Houdmann

Right, and we'll we'll discuss that more later. That last sentence that you said. But yeah, that's a good reminder, alright.

MeLissa Houdmann

The next question is, my cousin says she would never have an abortion, but she believes others should have the choice. So kind of like the I'm pro life, but I'll stand up for your pro choice kind of thing. So how do I respond to her sentiment?

Beth DeVore

I understand that view to a point because I can be very cynical being a Gen Xer about the law. And think, well, we just need to make not aborting more attractive or we need to let Jesus change our hearts and you know the laws that are so harsh and actually I was reading through Galatians. 3:24 and it says, You know the law is our guardian. It shows us right and wrong. And did a little history. Ever since Aristotle societies have thought that life begins at the quickening, which is when the mother can feel the baby move and Aristotle thought that that happened at six weeks for boys and 11 and a half for girls.

MeLissa Houdmann

That's funny. I think that that changed a little since Aristotle was around.

Beth DeVore

But that was the belief for a very long time, even colonial America. So where did we get the idea in more modern times that a baby wasn't worth considering until into the first trimester? That came from Roe v. Wade that came from the law. The law actually changed, how we view babies a little bit and what we thought was ethically appropriate. Yeah, so we, we do need the law to set boundaries. The law does inform our own ethics and for those in our generations it may have a minimal effect, but for the generations of our kids it will have a greater effect whether babies are considered persons at conception or later on, by the law. Of course, the law doesn't save us at a deeper level. Paul went to great lengths to show this. Galatians 3:23-24 now before faith came, we were held in custody under the law being kept as prisoners until becoming faith would be revealed. Thus, the law had become our guardian until Christ, so that we could be declared righteous by faith.

Beth DeVore

So the law can affect our behavior and our beliefs. But really, it only reveals the fact that there's something wrong with our hearts. And it does this in conjunction with the Holy Spirit. John 16 says the Holy Spirit can fix the world of sin, righteousness and judgment, and that's where we come in. That's where the church comes in to say where to go from there.

Gwen Sellers

And you know, I've heard that in the pro life movement, they often they talk about having different sort of prongs of the issue and one is the law. I mean we do want abortion to be outlawed, but like you said ultimately our society needs a heart change and really we want to be at a place where abortion is just unconscionable, it's just not even a thought like why would that be the solution? Because we have other solutions and other practical helps. And like you said, like that's where the church comes in.

Gwen Sellers

So what are some ways that you guys have seen that happen? Like what are those practical, on the grounds, let's change the hearts of people and provide support.

MeLissa Houdmann

Yeah, so I think this this whole sphere gives the church an opportunity to love people in very practical hands on ways. You know if we value the lives of the unborn and the women who carry them, both of them. We value both of them. You know, if we want life and flourishing for both of those people, you know we have to use more than words. We can't just post a meme or a sign or even sign a petition or vote for a specific candidate, you know, once we do that, we might get in an endorphin rush and call it good. You know we're good. We did our part. But you know we can't just say don't kill your baby and then hey go in peace and keep warm and well fed I think that's in James somewhere. We have to. We have to be able to put action behind those words, and you know, I I had a really amazing thing and really amazing in a life changing experience a few years ago.

MeLissa Houdmann

I was having coffee with a friend at a local coffee shop and I actually called her and asked if I could share this and she gave me permission, but we go to coffee occasionally. And during our conversation she slid a little piece of paper about this big across the table and she said something like, I'm pregnant. Do you want my baby? If you've never had that happen to you, it's quite a feeling to have someone ask you to raise their child. I mean, yeah, I'm pro life, but am I willing for that position to completely change my entire life until the day I die. Of course, I said yes, and then I realized I probably should talk to my husband about that life changing decision, thankfully he was in agreement.

MeLissa Houdmann

But you know, when we it, it's it's more than just hey, I hold this position. I'm pro life. It's like what am I willing to do about it? How am I willing to support someone? How am I willing to make let this change my life if I really think that God values this human life. So yeah, that's my input there.

Beth DeVore

Yeah, unfortunately I've heard people talk about supporting different issues like this as the social gospel. Like if we provide practical support then somehow that takes away from sharing the good news of salvation, and that is not what we're talking about. The good news that Jesus provides is not that we will have happy, successful, fulfilling lives. Our love and support of people in need is not the gospel, it is the result of the gospels work in us. It is our expression of God's love. It is the Holy Spirit working through us and I just want to make that clear.

MeLissa Houdmann

Yeah, that's that's really important. That's good. Thank you, Beth. Alright you guys ready for another question?

Beth DeVore and Gwen Sellers

Yeah Alright.

MeLissa Houdmann

How can we support women who are experiencing an unwanted pregnancy? Or maybe just you know, a surprise?

Gwen Sellers

Well, I mean, I think one thing is just, you know, organizations in general, most cities have a local, or, I assume most cities have a local pregnancy center. So I mean we can donate money. We can also donate our time. I know someone who volunteers as she's a nurse and so she volunteers at the pregnancy center. Those types of centers have like counselors and things like that. Beth, I know you have some organizations in mind.

Beth DeVore

Yeah, I'm thinking back to when I was in the dorm in university and a girl across the hall for me became pregnant and she was in ROTC and back then you could not be pregnant in ROTC and we happened to go to a Catholic college so and she was Catholic. And obviously, abortion is not an option and I didn't know her that well and I didn't know what to do, but a mutual friend of ours stepped up and she said you are having that baby and I'm going to be with you every step of the way. And that was just awesome that she was there for her.

Beth DeVore

Since then more organizations have started to realize hey, these girls in college who get pregnant, they have very little support. They there they often feel they either have to drop out or they have to have an abortion. And fortunately, there's more answers. There's an organization called Women Deserve better and they have a website that includes information for college students, some of it is you know how do I find a babysitter and things like that? And some of it is really helpful tips and explanations of their legal rights under Title 9, which includes everything from you know what if you miss a test to can I go back to playing soccer after I have my baby? And I think that's just awesome because you're in this position where you don't know what's going on. You have all these responsibilities and there's a lot of money at stake with college, and to have someone there to help along the way is a big relief.

Beth DeVore

And fortunately is the military is also making changes. The army just came out with better pro family regulations. Like if both spouses are active duty, one of them is exempt from deployment from a year when a baby is born. There are now extended bereavement leaves depending on how far along the pregnancy was. If there was a miscarriage and honestly if there was an abortion as well, to give the parents time to recover from that.

Beth DeVore

Our own Air Force Academy up the road is making pretty big changes because it used to be cadets could not have any dependents and the women didn't. The female cadets didn't know what to do. They could drop out, have the baby and adopt the baby out and hope that they could get custody again once they graduated. Or they could quietly have an abortion and that happened way, way more often than we think and that is, it is great to see the military recognizing that the kids do matter, the parents matter and making sure that that they can be together. And it certainly makes the military environment more healthy.

Beth DeVore

There's adoption and foster care, and my son is adopted, and I think we talked last time about the incredible grace and sacrifice of the birth mother who gives their baby up for adoption and I know we have been very much blessed by our son's birth mother sacrifice and I know that was very hard for her. And I hope we have sufficiently honored her sacrifice.

MeLissa Houdmann

I think you have. You've raised a good son. Oh, another thing that I think is kind of maybe plays in here a little bit is organizations that help with child sponsorship or in areas of poverty and a lot of abortions happen in those communities because there's it seems like there's no other option. I mean, I can't feed the kids I have. How can I add another, and so Compassion and other organizations are really working towards helping single moms or even family units in intact family units. So I'm really grateful.

Beth DeVore

MeLissa, can I ask a question?

MeLissa Houdmann

Yeah.

Beth DeVore

How many compassion kids do you have now?

MeLissa Houdmann

I think we have six. We kind of figure we kind of figure we can't have kids of our own, so we just gotta support other people's. You know, but I love them each. I love them each. And another thing. Gwen I we got a question last Saturday, I was assigning questions, for Got Questions and a question came in that sometimes I think you ladies will agree with me. Sometimes a question hits you a little harder than others, and maybe you think about it for a while and you're like OK. This this one I need to pray on this and I want to pray for this person. This particular question came from a young man in college and his, his girlfriend was going to have an abortion and he would didn't want her to have an abortion, but he's like what do I do? What are what can I do? How can I persuade her, you know? And so maybe I could you talk about that a little bit from your counseling perspective maybe? What kind of counsel you would give him? Like what personal support would you give him?

Gwen Sellers

Yeah, I mean, well, I think you and I talked about this a little bit before the podcast. And I think you know your first instinct was to tell him to pray for her, and that is definitely step number one. I mean if something good is going to happen in this situation, it's going to be from God, so praying for her, praying for himself, and then, you know, talking to her and to try to change her mind. But I think doing it in a way that's empathetic, that understands her concerns and recognizes them, and then offers different options.

Gwen Sellers

I think sometimes women in that situation feel like there is no other solution. The only solution is to terminate the pregnancy when often that's just not true. You know there are these pregnancy centers that provide support. Or maybe this guy you know. Like maybe when she finds out oh wow he he wants to be a father. You know, and he would provide financial support or his family would or her family would you know there are just all these things that when you're surprised or afraid, you don't think of. So if he offered those kind of resources to her, and then I think you know, maybe he could encourage her to go to a pregnancy center with him where she could get a sonogram.

Gwen Sellers

You know, like with your friend. I think often times when a woman actually sees the baby and it looks like a baby, that triggers something and and it becomes real. And also those are the places that you know that have support and that have those networks to connect you to or local churches to connect you to, and I think to just for himself going to a center like that or going to a counselor.

Gwen Sellers

Unfortunately, in our culture the fathers are often overlooked. You know it's presented as this is the woman's choice and the woman's responsibility. And that's just that's sad. I mean, you know I agree with when a woman has a baby, yes, the father should be responsible. He should, he should help pay child support and he should do those things, but he should also be responsible and involved in the decision. That's his child. So the decision to abort, to adopt, you know, all of those things. The father should be responsible for that and should be invited into that.

Gwen Sellers

I think there are a lot of men who really want to be invited into that, and they're stuck in a hard place too. If they want to support this woman, but they also have feelings for the child. So yeah, so I guess just for him I would say find that local pregnancy center because my guess is they have counseling for mom and dad and they have resources that might change her decision. And yeah, and like we started with prayer is what he needs most.

MeLissa Houdmann

Our local pregnancy center has a counselor for the guys, for the dads because ultimately sometimes they don't get a say, and they need to get help too, so any uh post abortive counseling, I would encourage him as well in that. So Beth, do you have anything to add to that?

Beth DeVore

No, those are great and I think they're equally, that's equally great information for just the friend of the person who's having an unplanned pregnancy to offer to be there too, as my friend did with our classmate in college to say you know, I'm not going anywhere. This is going to be OK.

MeLissa Houdmann

Right. I'll walk with. Thank you.

Beth DeVore

Yeah, shortly after we adopted our son, I showed up at the women's group and my friend who had seven kids 7 and under and was pregnant with twins looked at me and said you're bringing him to my house tomorrow afternoon. And you're taking a nap.

MeLissa Houdmann

I love that, that's great.

Beth DeVore

I said, and I felt so much better knowing that I had that support system.

MeLissa Houdmann

Beth back then I would come do your laundry, but I'm not going to do that now, 'cause he's like 20 now so. He can do his own laundry. Alright, anything else you ladies want to talk about in regards to that?

Beth DeVore

I just wanted to speak to friends who have already had an abortion. I've been in that position as well and of course it depends on where they are in their their journey and their understanding. But thinking of one particular friend who hadn't been able to process that it was wrong yet, and to go into it without any judgment to be supportive to quietly and respectfully hold your your understanding that it was wrong without being argumentative, without being hurtful and kind of wait and then be there. It turned out that we were at a retreat and she saw a bumper sticker that said I'm pro choice before conception, and that's what made the light bulb go off. Oh OK, that was wrong. But then you know just to continue being there and and supporting her without supporting the decision and loving her and not being afraid of what she did and not being afraid of consequences.

MeLissa Houdmann

Right?

Beth DeVore

But focusing in on her.

MeLissa Houdmann

Yeah, I I heard a statement the other day at a conference. It was like sometimes our witness can be a great witness. You know, as I walk with you, as I'm next to you, as we're rubbing shoulders together in a situation that can often just lead someone to the Lord. So I think that's phenomenal.

MeLissa Houdmann

OK, we have one last question and this one is, what is the best way to present the Pro life point of view in the public square or public sphere? So I'll I'll throw something out here. I'm the social media manager for Got Questions and man, social media can be an ugly place, so I would encourage my fellow believers to post caring and kind things regarding this pro-life issue. You know, is every post cloaked in love and kindness. Does every post speak the truth and by your post are you bringing someone toward the Gospel of Jesus?

MeLissa Houdmann

Someone who doesn't know him and ultimately sometimes it's, it's not that way, so I would encourage all of us to, if you're posting a meme or a post, or you're sharing a link, think twice and cloak that post in the love of Jesus. So what about the rest of you.

Beth DeVore

Well, to piggyback on that, my last podcast was with Pastor Doug and he talked about being kind on social media. Highly recommend the podcast and his book, going in further or to the other direction about pro abortion advocates who get belligerent. And I would go to Luke 6, which is Jesus's Sermon on the plain and it is all about when someone attacks you for your faith, the response is love, forgiveness, seek their the best in their lives and then love them and then forgive them. And then seek the best in their lives and he goes on for several verses. It's very. He was very serious about it and screaming back being fearful, that's not going to help anybody. It's certainly not going to change their minds. It's only going to widen the divide. So please, please think twice before you respond to your friends meme or comment about women's rights and yeah love, forgive them and seek their best.

MeLissa Houdmann

I had to do that this morning Beth, that's so funny and I totally knew we were going to do this podcast and I still had to think twice and put my mouse down and walk away. And you know what? That's nothing wrong with that, right? Or Gwen do you have anything you'd like to share with us?

Gwen Sellers

Well I think for me one thing that comes to mind is is what we were talking about that before of putting feet to your faith or like you said you know your witness is your witness. And I mean I we can say all these things on social media but how often is our mind really changed by that? So you know I what we say in public is definitely important, but I think it's backed up by what we do in private. You know when someone thinks like oh well Christians think this or they do that. What happens when they come to your church? So if they think you know someone thinks oh Christians are mean and judgmental when that unwed mother shows up to your church and instead she's met with grace and love and with people who say wow we want it like how can we support you? What do you need? What kind of baby shower you know can we throw you? What resources can we connect you with? How can we support you in discipleship? Can we babysit your kid? Can we do laundry for you?

Gwen Sellers

So when people see believers actually acting in love, I think that puts so much more weight behind the words that we say and can hopefully also take some of that off when those words you know aren't great, like they yeah, so let your life, I guess be the witness and back up what you say you believe with what you actually do.

Gwen Sellers

And I know, yeah, I know we're running out of time here. But one thing that we we just want to make abundantly clear is that if you have been involved in abortion in any way, maybe you aborted your child. Maybe you supported your girlfriend or your wife, or you know in aborting the child. Maybe you weren't allowed to have a choice. Maybe you were a medical care provider in that situation, maybe you've told a friend to get an abortion. Maybe you've you know advocated for abortion. Whatever it might be and if you're now realizing wow that was wrong. There the good news is we are all sinners. There is grace and forgiveness for you. Jesus's death on the cross covers that just as much as it covers every sin in my life. So please don't don't live in guilt. Don't live in shame, bring that to the foot of the cross and experience the freedom that Christ has for you. There is life on the other side of this.

MeLissa Houdmann

That's beautiful, Gwen. It's we want to leave you today with just a couple resources for you. The first one is we have a great website called 412teens.org and it's our site for teens. But you know what? I read the articles on there all the time and I'm not a teenager, so there's an article on there called how should a teen view on what a pregnancy something like that? It's a phenomenal article. Feel free to share that on social media. Also, it could be really helpful for someone in that situation.

MeLissa Houdmann

We also have a book we want to recommend. It's called *Worthy of Love*, a journey of hope and healing after abortion. Phenomenal resource will encourage you to reach out to this author Shadya Richie, and we'll put that in the show notes for you.

MeLissa Houdmann

Also, there's a website we wanted to recommend and it's called *If Not For Grace Ministries* and they do online resources and counseling for post abortive women and men, so reach out to them it's infg.org.

MeLissa Houdmann

And we encourage you to read our article also on *Got Questions*. How can I experience healing and recovery after an abortion? And it's at the that that website is linked to at the bottom of that article, so we want to thank you for joining us today. I hope that this conversation has been helpful and insightful and also let us know how we can pray for you. Let us know if you're in this situation, how can we pray for you? It would be our joy and our honor to do that to lift you up to the throne of grace together, my three sisters here would love to do that for you. We'll meet out in the lobby and do that for you, so thanks for joining us.

MeLissa Houdmann

If you have questions, the Bible has answers and we'll help you find them. Goodbye.