

PART VI

SOCIAL QUESTIONS

Chapter

27 – Choice?

28 – Illegal Abortions

29 – Parental Notification

30 – Rape

31 – Impose Morality?

32 – Unwanted

33 – The West Is Dying?

CHAPTER 27

CHOICE?

*Does she have a right to choose abortion?
Does this supersede the fetal Right to Live?*

THE POSITION IS:

The main question is: “Who decides, the woman or the government?” Clearly, this is a woman’s rights issue. This is the basic and only question. Should she or should she not have the right to choose?

- Are you a sincere person who thinks abortion is wrong but still believes the woman should have the right to choose?
- Are you disturbed by the high number of abortions (one for every four live births) and that it is used for birth control?
- Are you comfortable with this position? Or are you troubled by the conflict it presents?

Let’s look closer.

A nation in conflict . . .

There are many people today who believe that abortion is wrong. They recognize that medical science has long since proven conclusively that human life begins

at fertilization. Accordingly, they cannot and do not deny that abortion is killing. Further, most also believe abortion is against God's will.

But many of these sincere people feel that women's rights are so important that she should be allowed to choose to end the life of her developing baby.

This is an untenable position. A person can't have it both ways. If abortion is wrong, then both mother and baby should be protected, unless it can be shown that one's life (the mother's) might be lost if the pregnancy were allowed to continue. Only the preservation of one life is weighty enough to justify endangering or possibly losing another.

Choice – A live baby or a dead baby!



Once a woman is pregnant, barring a miscarriage or an induced abortion, she'll have a baby. Therefore, her only choice is, "How is the baby going to come out?" Will he or she come out alive and crying, or dead in pieces? For many women this is an agonizing decision.

Truly, her choice is between life and death — a live baby or a dead one. But, for many women, it doesn't end with the abortion. It can impact the rest of her life. There can be physical complications. Perhaps more important, for many, is the emotional aftermath that can result.

On the other hand, if she toughs it out and carries her baby to term, there can instead be good memories — her own child to love and cherish. Or, if she is in no position to parent her child, she can place her baby for adoption in a pair of loving arms of a couple unable to have a child of their own.

The slavery analogy . . .

In 1857 the U.S. Supreme Court decided the Dred Scott Decision. By a 7-2 vote it ruled that black people were not “legal persons,” that they were the property of the slave owner, who was granted the basic constitutional right to own a slave. Abolitionists protested, to be met with this answer: “We understand you oppose slavery and find it morally offensive. That is your privilege. You don’t have to own a slave if you don’t want to. But don’t impose your morality on the slave owner. He has the constitutionally protected right to choose to own a slave.”

Today the conflict is abortion, and the very same argument is used. In 1973 the U.S. Supreme Court, by a 7-2 decision, ruled that unborn humans were not “legal persons,” that they were the property of the owner (the mother) who was given the basic constitutional right to choose to kill her unborn offspring.

Pro-lifers have protested, to be met with the same answer . . .” We understand that you oppose abortion and find it morally offensive. That is your privilege. You don’t have to have an abortion if you don’t want to. But don’t impose your morality on the owner, the mother, for she has the constitutional right to choose to kill, if she wishes.

In the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates, Mr. Douglas defended the right to choose. Abraham Lincoln’s answer comes down to us ringingly clear. His reply was, “No one has the right to choose to do what is wrong.”

In today’s debate the same basic ethic should be our guide.

"No one has the right to choose to do what is wrong."

Abraham Lincoln

Also see chart in Chapter 6.

ANOTHER ANSWER:

Is her "choice" the overriding concern?

This is effectively answered by considering a different issue, one that also raises a significant moral question. Let's consider a hypothetical situation:

A group of young men have just started a "Right to Rape" organization. They explain that they believe they have the right to choose to rape women. The real question, they tell us, is "Who decides, us or the government? We believe the government should stay out of this very private matter." Furthermore, they want the state to set up tax-funded centers where they can rape women in a safe, legal fashion.

What should our response be?

We would promptly reply:

"You can't do that. Rape is wrong!"

Note carefully the answer. The "real question," the first, most important and overriding question, is not "who decides," but a question about the action itself. We must first ask ourselves, "Is rape right or wrong?" Only then can we answer the question of who has the right to choose to do it.

We could use other human actions that also have obvious moral overtones to illustrate this. Does a burglar have the right to choose to rob your house? A husband to abuse his wife and children? Of course not. The most critical question always is to first judge the action itself.

And so it is with abortion. First, one must ask, "Is abortion right or wrong?" Only then can we consider a second question and ask "Who can choose to do this?"

Rights have limits . . .

I have a right to swing my fist, but that right stops at your nose. We have the right to freedom of speech, but not to shout “fire” in a theater. We have a right to freedom of religion, but not if that religion involves human sacrifice.

A woman has a right to her body, but this new being growing within her is not part of her body. Rather, this is a totally different human being, half of whom are even of a different sex.

Compassion for her . . .

In the U.S., pro-lifers, in their concern for pregnant women and their needs, have established numerous women helping centers (4,000). There are also almost 3,000 Right to Life chapters. The volunteers who staff both are overwhelmingly female. In addition, pro-lifers take pregnant women into their homes, collect maternity and baby clothes and adopt children far more frequently than other citizens, very often babies with handicaps. They offer legal, medical and social help for women during and after their pregnancies and after their abortions.

The abortion industry, in contrast, offers a violent “solution” to her problem — abortion. They have no other choices available for the pregnant woman in need of help.

The pro-life movement stands with her. The rights of women and the rights of the unborn should be joined. Loving alternatives, like adoption, must be the focus of our debate. We reach out to every woman faced with the agony of abortion and say to her, “Your life and the life of your baby are both important, and we will not desert either one of you.”

“We want to love you both.”