

Abortion: Freedom or Misery?

Whenever the subject of abortion comes up there is a heated debate. Is abortion wrong? Is abortion right? Is a woman free to abort her unborn child at anytime during the pregnancy? Even among Christians the questions and issues are greatly diverse. Some ultra conservative Christians teach that abortion at anytime during the pregnancy, even if the mother's life is threatened, is murder. "Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being" (Catholic Teaching).

Other Christians teach that abortion on demand is wrong but under certain circumstances it is permissible. Here is a statement from one denomination about abortion: "Prenatal human life is a magnificent gift of God. God's ideal for human beings affirm the sanctity of human life, in God's image, and requires respect for prenatal life. However, decisions about life must be made in the context of a fallen world. Abortion is never an action of little moral consequence. Thus, prenatal life must not be thoughtlessly destroyed. Abortion should be performed only for the most serious reasons. . . Abortions for reasons of birth control, gender selection, or convenience are not condoned by the church. Women, at times however, may face exceptional circumstances that present serious moral or medical dilemmas, such as significant threats to the pregnant woman's life, serious jeopardy to her health, severe congenital defects carefully diagnosed in the fetus, and pregnancy resulting from rape or incest. The final decision whether to terminate the pregnancy or not should be made by the pregnant woman after appropriate consultation." (Adventists Guidelines on Abortion)

The extreme liberal approach to abortion is explained in this quote: "A woman has the right to decide what happens with her body. A fetus is not a human life, so it does not have separate individual rights. . . The decision to have an abortion is a personal choice of a woman regarding her own body and the government must protect this right. Women have the right to affordable, safe and legal abortions, including partial birth abortion." (Student News Daily, 2010). The extreme liberal's approach is further explained by Eileen McDonagh in the scholarly article "Liberalism and Abortion" written by Robin West, of Georgetown University Law Center, USA. "A woman's right to abortion should be understood as a right to defend herself against the nonconsensual invasion, appropriation, and use of her physical body by an unwelcome fetus, rather than as a right to use medical procedures free of interference by the state." This view clearly teaches that once a woman does not want a pregnancy the fetus in her womb is considered to be an "invasion" of her body so she is free to abort.

WHY DO WOMEN HAVE AN ABORTION?

Research gives a number of reasons women abort their unborn children. Interestingly, research indicates that less than one percent of total reported abortions are due to incest. Also, only three to five percent of abortions are decisions made by women because of fetal health or threat to the mother. According to many studies the primary reasons for choosing an abortion are: (1) pregnancy was not planned or wanted, (2) not ready to have a baby yet, (3) inconvenient time of life or the child interferes with goals, (4) financial concerns, pressure by parents or other family members, (5) fear of people finding out about the pregnancy.

What influences a woman to think about abortion when it is her view that the pregnancy is at the wrong time of her life or for any of the above reasons? Is it because she has no support from family or friends? Is it because she is embarrassed? I ask this question because in spite of the extreme liberal

views that a woman can have an abortion anytime during pregnancy and that the fetus is just an invasion of the body, many do suffer emotionally for a long time after the abortion. In my article on abortion in 2011, I stated the following: “. . . abortion is associated with elevated rates of suicide, death from other causes, substance abuse, clinical depression, and psychiatric hospitalization. It has been discovered that there are many emotional aspects that can affect the psychological well being of women who undergo an abortion. These emotions include guilty feelings, anxiety, depression, loss, anger, and even suicide. Clinical research has found that when women are in trusting, sharing relationships, they report deep-seated feelings of exploitation over their abortion experience.”

While it is also my view that a woman does have the right to choose whether or not to abort the unborn child, that decision must be made after thoughtful considerations and clearly looking at the issues. I believe that if the woman felt that there was a support system of compassionate, caring, nonjudgmental people and understood more clearly the options available (e.g. adoption) we would have fewer abortions.

I AM PRO CHOICE/FAMILY

If I would use the American terms to describe the views of abortion, I can say I am “pro choice.” While I do not hold the views of all “pro choice” proponents, it is my view that all wise-thinking human beings and more so Christians, are to be “pro choice.” This view is that the individual has the God-given right to choose. However, I am also pro family. This means that although I am free to choose, God expects me to think wisely, look objectively at the options, always considering that the fetus is of great value. I do believe that there are times that abortion is necessary (e.g. rape, incest and certain medical reasons). However, when there is no such threat, abortion is not an option. However, it is my view that all persons are to display a spirit of compassion even toward someone who chooses abortion for frivolous reasons.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT SYSTEM

It is my view that we need more individuals, churches, and institutions to be less condemning and more compassionate and understanding toward persons considering abortion or who have done an abortion. There are countless stories of daughters who were forced by their “godly parents” to have an abortion to “save the face of the family.” Some of these parents were more concerned about the family reputation than the emotional well-being of the pregnant mother. Thus, they drive their daughters into depression, low self-esteem, and despair. Some of these daughters suffer silently for years. The scares are deep. The pain lingers on and on. While I am pro choice, this kind of decision is foolish, self-serving, and down right stupid. Not only did an innocent fetus die, the emotional life of someone was also damaged.

On the other hand there are countless stories of daughters who were raped or made a bad choice that caused pregnancy and feared telling anyone, especially their rigid, controlling, emotionally condemning parents. If only these daughters were aware of their options or about a support system. The longer these daughters keep their pregnancies secret the greater the difficulty of making the decision about an abortion. It’s an emotionally painful journey to be on. We need to provide freedom and not misery. We need to provide hope and healing and not despair.

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