

IS ABORTION MORALLY WRONG?

An Ethical Position Paper
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History of the issue

The quick answer to the question, "*Is abortion morally wrong?*" is yes. I firmly believe that abortion is morally reprehensible and should be categorically opposed, as it inflicts harm on multiple levels—upon the unborn child, the mother, the family, and society as a whole. It is an inherently evil act, driven by material profit and a false premise of freedom and autonomy to advance personal agendas. Therefore, it is morally wrong to commit abortion because:

- It violates God's design for human life and the sanctity of life, thereby degrading humanity's intrinsic worth.
- It causes significant harm to the unborn child and the mother.
- It undermines and disrupts the structure and unity of the family.
- It has far-reaching negative consequences for society.

Abortion is not a new issue for humankind. It is one of the most abhorrent practices perpetrated by the Enemy to misguide, deceive, and confuse humanity, ultimately seeking to disrupt and negatively impact God's divine plan. Across various cultures and societies, abortion has remained a significant moral and ethical issue, albeit manifesting differently than in America. For example, in countries like China, India, and Nepal, abortions are often performed due to societal and cultural preferences for sons over daughters. This preference is deeply troubling, as it devalues daughters, who are equally important and intrinsically worthy, just as boys are.

In the United States, the issue of abortion reached unprecedented levels following the *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973. Since then, over 60 million abortions have been performed—a staggering and terrifying truth about America.¹ This number represents a profound moral failure, with the nation metaphorically bearing "bloody hands" for committing such a heinous sin against God. Proponents of *Roe v. Wade* have often cited various justifications for abortion, including the advancement of women's rights and workplace equality. Feminist movements, in particular, have championed reproductive autonomy, arguing that access to abortion is necessary for women to achieve parity with men in economic and professional realms. Unfortunately, this perspective has only fueled the growth of the abortion industry. For example, organizations such as Planned Parenthood have received government funding to facilitate and expand access to abortion services.

The *Roe v. Wade* decision decriminalized abortion across the United States and encouraged states to legalize and provide access to the procedure. This decision significantly increased the number of abortions performed in the country. Additionally, women's rights advocates have continued to push for reproductive autonomy, emphasizing abortion as a means to secure equality in the workforce and broader society. This shift in societal values reflects a grave departure from the intrinsic worth of every human life, both born and unborn.

Technical background

¹ Guttmacher Institute. "Induced Abortion in the United States." Last modified March 30, 2021. <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-united-states>.

1. Medical Background²

Abortion refers to the termination of a pregnancy before the fetus can survive outside the womb.

There are various types of abortion:

- Spontaneous Abortion (Miscarriage): The natural loss of a pregnancy before the fetus is viable.
- Induced Abortion: A deliberate medical or surgical intervention to end a pregnancy.
- Therapeutic Abortion: Performed when the fetus may have serious health issues, such as Down Syndrome or other developmental abnormalities.

Methods of Induced Abortion:

- Medical Abortion: Involves medications such as mifepristone and misoprostol, typically used within the first 10 weeks of pregnancy.
- Surgical Abortion:
 - Aspiration (Suction Curettage): Commonly performed during the first trimester.
 - Dilation and Evacuation (D&E): Used primarily during the second trimester.
 - Induction Abortion: Induces labor to expel the fetus, typically used later in pregnancy.

Viability: Refers to the point at which a fetus can survive outside the womb, generally around 22-24 weeks with advanced medical intervention. This concept is central to many bioethical and legal debates.

2. Legal Context

- Roe v. Wade (1973): This landmark U.S. Supreme Court case legalized abortion by establishing a trimester-based framework that balanced a woman's right to choose and the state's interests in regulating abortion.
- Post-Dobbs Legal Patchwork: Following the 2022 overturning of Roe v. Wade, various U.S. states have enacted divergent laws, ranging from outright abortion bans to robust protections for abortion access.

Key Legal Terms:

- Personhood: A central issue in abortion law, questioning when human life acquires moral and legal status.
- Undue Burden Standard: Established by *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992), this legal principle assesses whether state laws place excessive restrictions on a woman's right to obtain an abortion.

3. Philosophical and Ethical Issues

- Personhood and Moral Status: One of the main ethical debates surrounding abortion is when life begins and the moral status of the fetus. Philosophical views include:
 - Biological View: Argues that life begins at conception.
 - Developmental View: Suggests that moral status increases as the fetus develops, with some arguing for recognition of personhood at viability or sentience.
 - Relational View: Posits that personhood is determined by the fetus's relationship with society, such as its recognition by others.

² Liederbach, Mark, and Evan Lenow. "15." Essay. In *Ethics as Worship: The Pursuit of Moral Discipleship*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2021.

- Competing Rights: Balancing the autonomy of the pregnant woman with the moral consideration of the fetus is a key bioethical dilemma.

Principles of Bioethics (Beauchamp and Childress):

- Autonomy: The right of women to make decisions about their bodies.
- Beneficence: The duty to promote the well-being of all individuals involved in the abortion decision.
- Nonmaleficence: Avoiding harm to both the woman and the fetus.
- Justice: Ensuring fair and equitable access to healthcare and respecting diverse moral perspectives on abortion.

4. Theological Considerations

From a Christian perspective, abortion contradicts the belief in the sanctity of life. The Bible consistently emphasizes the value of human life, which is created by God and formed in His image.

- Psalm 139:13-16 highlights God's intimate role in the creation of life within the womb, affirming the sacredness of the unborn.
- Imago Dei (Genesis 1:26-27): The concept of humans being made in God's image underscores the inherent dignity and worth of both the unborn and the mother.

Abortion conflicts with the theological belief that human life is precious and ordained by God, as evidenced by scriptural passages that emphasize the sanctity of life and the divine plan for human beings.

State of the issue today

According to a recent report by the Pew Research Center, abortion is widely accepted in the United States. Approximately 62–63% of Americans believe that abortion should be legal in most or all cases, while about 29% think it should be illegal in most cases. Support for the legality of abortion shows notable gender differences, with 66% of women favoring legal access compared to 57% of men.

The political divide on this issue is even more pronounced. Among Democrats, 84% support the legality of abortion, compared to only 38% of Republicans. These statistics reflect significant ideological differences in how Americans perceive the issue of abortion in the current social and political climate.³

Description of and response to the opposing views

There are at least three significant arguments against abortion, demonstrating why it is morally wrong.

First, abortion violates God's design for human life. The Bible underscores the sanctity of human life in Genesis 1:26–27, where humanity's creation is described as a unique and sacred act. The passage states: "Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:26-27, NIV)

³ Pew Research Center. "Majority of Public Continues to Favor Legal Abortion, Oppose Overturning Roe v. Wade." Pew Research Center, May 6, 2021. <https://www.pewresearch.org>.

This text reveals the extraordinary value God assigns to human beings by creating them in His image, or *Imago Dei*. Humanity is distinct from the rest of creation, endowed with dignity, purpose, and eternal significance. Abortion, therefore, is not merely a personal decision but a violation of the divine order, unjustly ending the life of a defenseless human being.

While proponents of abortion rights may reject this theological foundation, the reality remains that this world is the creation of an infinite and eternally righteous God. Obedience to His Word is not only morally right but essential for upholding justice. The truth of *Imago Dei*—that every person is made in God's image—stands as the supreme moral reality. The act of abortion fundamentally denies this truth, making it a grievous violation of God's design for human life.

Second, abortion is morally wrong because it inflicts harm upon the unborn child, who is intrinsically valuable, and upon the mother.

The unborn child is created in the image of God and, as such, has inherent worth. Even in the early stages of development, the fetus is on a trajectory toward becoming a fully functioning human being. One common argument for abortion is that the unborn are not fully persons until they achieve consciousness, feel pain, or are able to make moral decisions. This argument falters when applied to individuals who may be in a coma or paralyzed due to an accident. Should we then advocate for ending the lives of those who are temporarily incapacitated or contribute very little to society? Such reasoning would lead to moral degradation, as it implies that the value of life is based solely on productivity or consciousness, which is a dangerous and unethical line of thought.

According to the American Pregnancy Association, the developmental milestones of the unborn child are evident: at week five, the heart begins to beat, and brain development starts; by week 12, the baby has distinct human features, including fingers, toes, and facial characteristics; by week 20, the fetus can hear external sounds, including the mother's voice; and by week 24, the unborn baby is considered "viable," meaning it has a chance of surviving outside the womb with medical assistance.⁴ These milestones illustrate the sophisticated and undeniable development of the unborn child. In light of such remarkable scientific evidence, it becomes difficult to justify continuing practices that sacrifice the lives of unborn children for personal or societal gain.

Some proponents of abortion may argue in favor of therapeutic abortion when the unborn child is diagnosed with physical abnormalities or conditions like Down syndrome or low survival rates. However, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the incidence of such conditions is rare.⁵ Even in cases where such conditions are present, the sanctity of human life should still be upheld, trusting that God has a purpose for each life, regardless of its perceived quality or potential.

Furthermore, abortion has significant psychological, emotional, and physical consequences for mothers. Studies have shown that women who undergo abortions often experience increased rates of depression, anxiety, and regret. Post-abortion trauma can lead to symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), as many women report feelings of guilt or unresolved grief. Physically, women may face complications, including infection or long-term

⁴ American Pregnancy Association. "Fetal Development." Last modified September 1, 2021. <https://americanpregnancy.org>.

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Abnormalities in Pregnancy: Facts and Figures." Last modified October 1, 2023. <https://www.cdc.gov>.

reproductive health issues. The psychological and physical suffering of mothers must be considered as a serious consequence of abortion.

In conclusion, the unborn child holds intrinsic worth and can experience physical sensations of existence from a very early stage, while mothers often endure traumatic psychological and physical effects following an abortion. Therefore, abortion is not only a moral wrong against the child but also harmful to the mother.

Third, abortion is morally wrong because it negatively impacts the community at large. The effects of abortion extend beyond the mother to her family, especially in the case of a married woman. A profound sense of guilt and pain may emerge, potentially creating a rift in the marriage. This emotional turmoil can further affect the family dynamic, causing strain in relationships and even diminishing the quality of life. As a result, the mother may become less productive in her professional and social roles, thus impacting her community. These effects highlight one dimension of the broader societal consequences of abortion.

Another critical dimension of abortion's societal impact is its devaluation of human life. When society permits the termination of an unborn child, it sends a message that human beings are less valuable than personal desires, careers, or societal goals. This undermines the intrinsic worth of human life, which is foundational to many ethical and theological beliefs. Opponents of abortion argue that abortion advocates often claim that it is necessary for women to pursue equality and personal advancement, yet such arguments overlook the broader harm to the family structure and community. The devaluation of life perpetuates a culture that prioritizes individual success over the dignity and sanctity of human existence.

This perspective challenges the notion that abortion is an essential tool for gender equality. While advocates for abortion may view it as necessary for women to accomplish their personal and professional goals, it often results in disproportionate harm to the family and the broader society, reflecting a shift in cultural values that places personal achievements over collective well-being.

Biblical responses to the issue

The Bible is indubitably clear on the issue of abortion; it stands in opposition to God's design for human life. From the very beginning, God blessed Adam and Eve with a divine mandate to prosper and multiply. Genesis 1:28 (ESV) states, "And God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'" This is no ordinary task; it was a call to grow and lead God's creation. God's disapproval of murder is evident in the story of Cain and Abel, where God punishes Cain for killing Abel. God did not create humanity to harm or kill one another.

In Genesis 1:27, we are reminded of the supreme value of human life: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." This verse emphasizes the intrinsic worth of human life—created in the very image of God (Imago Dei)—which sets humans apart from all other creatures. Preserving and honoring this life is the highest form of respect we can offer. It is not right to dishonor God by destroying or abusing His creation.

Further supporting this understanding, Psalm 139:13-16 reflects on God's intimate role in the creation of each individual: "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.” If God intricately forms each life, how can we justify the destruction of that sacred life? The biblical narrative consistently affirms the sanctity of life from conception to death.

Additionally, the Bible commands, “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13). This command is fundamental to God’s design for human life, and abortion, as the taking of an innocent life, is morally and spiritually incompatible with Christian belief. While proponents of abortion may argue that opposing abortion while supporting capital punishment is inconsistent, the difference lies in the fact that murder and killing for justice are not morally equivalent. Abortion is the taking of an innocent life, which is a clear violation of God’s command.

Finally, the encounter between Jesus and John the Baptist while in the womb serves as a powerful argument against abortion. In Luke 1:41-44, the Bible states, “And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!’” This passage illustrates that even in the womb, unborn children have purpose, and their presence causes a response in the mother, leading her to worship. The Bible affirms that God has a plan for life even before birth, and He is glorified in those yet to be born.

Conclusion

In summary, abortion causes tremendous harm and is fundamentally opposed to God’s design for life. It denies the intrinsic worth of the unborn, who, despite their developmental stages, clearly demonstrate all qualities of humanity. Additionally, abortion inflicts significant psychological, mental, and physical stress on the mother, which can extend to her family and society at large. The harm of abortion reaches beyond individual loss, affecting the broader community by diminishing respect for human life.

Abortion is morally wrong, and the Bible unequivocally supports this stance. Scripture affirms the sanctity of life from conception, as seen in passages such as Genesis 1:26-27 and Psalm 139:13-16, which highlight that human beings are created in God’s image and intricately formed by Him. The commandment “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13) reinforces the belief that the taking of innocent life, including the unborn, is a violation of divine law. Ultimately, abortion contradicts God’s will and His plan for humanity, and it must be opposed to uphold righteousness through Jesus Christ.