
**MODULE
FIVE**

STUDENTS IN **ACTION**

BUILDING PRO-LIFE LEADERS

**DEFENDING
THE PRO-LIFE
POSITION**

[“For we can do nothing against the truth, but only for the truth.” -2 Corinthians 13:08

The previous chapters provide a lot of factual information about truth, human development and moral law. All that will be lost, however, if we aren’t able to effectively engage the increasingly pro-choice/pro-abortion culture. The natural reaction is to start sharing facts. While facts and the truth are critically important, so to is *how* you engage.

/// ***The vast majority of people will remember HOW you spoke to them
more than WHAT you said.***

Greg Koukl started *Stand to Reason* so he could help Christians better understand and defend the faith. That’s what apologetics is: using reasoned arguments to defend the faith. Greg wrote an invaluable book *Tactics* on how to engage with this increasingly hostile culture. At the heart of Greg’s teaching is what he calls the “Columbo method.” Now, most of you have not heard of Detective Columbo. (You can, however, find the 1990s show on several old show services.) Peter Falk’s signature line was, “Oh, just one more thing.” He was always asking questions of the suspects. He was weaving a web, that always helped him find the killer.

While you won’t be playing a detective, Greg Koukl brilliantly shows the importance of asking questions when engaging. First of all, think about how often you meet strangers in a social situation. How often do they ask you questions? Most today just want to talk about themselves. So, if *you* are asking questions, you will be building a communication bridge.

You’ll find that when it comes to a contentious issues like abortion, even discussions that begin civilly can quickly get ugly. That’s why it’s critical to remember that the focus is not winning a debate, but being a disciple of Christ. You want people to think more deeply about this very critical issue. You also can never forget you are a follower of Christ, called to treat everyone as a person made in God’s image. Also don’t ever forget that the person you are talking with may have had an abortion or persuaded someone to have one. We know the blood of Christ cleanses all sin. We also know the power of guilt that very often comes with this decision.

This means trying to effectively communicate and perhaps persuade. That will come about when you provide ideas that make the other person stop and think. Greg calls it “leaving a stone in their shoe.” In other words, leaving that pro-choice person with some concepts or facts that make her keep thinking about them long after the conversation is over.



“If you repeat a lie often enough, it becomes the truth.”

- Nazi WWII Propaganda chief Joseph Goebbels

Here is a video with a number of pro-choice and pro-abortion statements. Make a note of them so that we can make true judgments. Some of them are more familiar, because they were discussed, and countered, in previous chapters. Others may be new. They all have one thing in common: they are not arguments. We’ll see how that will help you develop a stronger, more effective, pro-choice message.

Video: Pro-choice protesters/CBC News

Protesters:

Who’s body, our body. Who’s body, our body.

Reporter:

In the chants

Protesters:

Abortion is our right.

Reporter:

On the signs a resounding rejection of the Supreme Court ruling from the streets of New York.

Protester:

I’ve got to show up.

Reporter:

This man joined his wife and daughters.

Reporter:

This is absolutely a human rights issue. And we need more men to show up. Everybody’s got to be here. This is our issue.

Reporter:

Prominent women’s rights lawyer Gloria Allred urged women not to lose hope.

Gloria Allred/Attorney:

This is a war on women and girls. We must not underestimate the impact of this. Our daughter’s lives are at risk. And we have to fight that.

Reporter:

A message clearly received at this rally and others across the country.

When it comes to how to communicate more effectively, it really helps to understand a bit about logic. Logic is how we think about issues so that we can make judgments that are true. Why is understanding logic important? Because you want to be able to identify the difference between an argument and an assertion. The fact is, most of what you’ll hear from pro-choice folks are assertions and not arguments.

An *assertion* is simply a statement. “My body, my choice!” is an assertion. “You have no right to tell a pregnant woman what to do” is an assertion. It simply is a person’s preference.

An argument is a statement that includes proof. To be the most effective when engaging such a controversial topic as abortion, the argument should include statements that are easy to affirm. I mentioned Scott Klusendorf in the chapter about *Truth and Abortion*. As he points out in his book *The Case for Life*, using a simple syllogism is an extremely effective tool when sharing the pro-life argument.

A syllogism is a way to reason that draws a conclusion based on two propositions.

The most famous syllogism is from Aristotle, the Greek philosopher who lived 300 years before Christ.

Aristotle's Argument:

Proposition One: All humans are mortal.

Proposition Two: Aristotle is human.

Conclusion: Therefore, Aristotle is mortal.

An assertion: Studying Aristotle is a waste of time.

Here is Scott's pro-life syllogism that you will want to memorize.

Proposition One: It's wrong to intentionally kill an innocent human being.

Proposition Two: Abortion is intentionally killing an innocent human being.

Conclusion: Therefore, abortion is wrong.

An assertion: My body, my choice.

Notice how this moral argument compares to the preference asserted in the pro-choice statements you watched in the news report. Now, those in favor of abortion call their positions arguments, but they are all assertions. More examples: *“It’s just a clump of cells.”* *“Abortion pills are more safe than taking Tylenol.”* *“Who should control a woman’s body, the government or the woman?”* *“You only care about the baby when it’s inside the womb.”* These and other assertions are important, because so many people believe them. That’s why countering those assertions with powerful arguments, the truth, is so critical.

One thing you notice about the pro-life arguments here: The Bible wasn't mentioned. Of course, the Bible **IS** the foundation of your worldview, but almost all the folks you'll encounter will not view the Bible as the authoritative Word of God. Most will say it's an ancient book of stories and should have no impact on how we should live. So, although the prayer is that those who are outside the faith will be persuaded to at least investigate Christianity, at this point you are presenting arguments that few have heard. So, although a Christian worldview informs your life, these approaches will help you build a bridge with those in favor of abortion who reject the faith. Keep the discussion focused. Is the other person making an argument, with facts that lead to a conclusion? Or just making an assertion, or statement?

Here are some ideas from the book *Tactics* that will help draw out those with contrary views:

"What do you mean by that?"

It's critical that both of you agree about the issue you are discussing. Sometimes, it's simply agreeing on the definition of a term.

"Can you help me understand?"

This allows you to delve deeper into the person's perspective. It makes them think and explain more. It's also a more friendly way to probe.

"How did you come to that conclusion?"

You can see if the person's evidence for their position supports their conclusion.

"Have you ever considered _____?"

Rather than driving home your conclusion, by asking if they've looked at the issue from your perspective can be surprisingly effective at lowering the temperature of the conversation.

Here's the key to our topic: The pro-life position is factual.

You are standing on firm, factual foundations when arguing the pro-life position. If you are challenged with the "that's just your opinion because you believe in God" statement, you'll be able to answer that your belief in God shouldn't mean the facts don't matter! You then answer in a way that clarifies that your position is based on facts.

Here are a few key facts that you can back up:

○ *There is such a thing as right and wrong.*

For example: we agree that shooting a toddler on the playground is wrong. You and the other person may disagree on what is right and wrong in different circumstances, but if you keep asking questions you'll find that the other person doesn't believe any and all actions are OK.

○ *Abortion is intentional.*

It's not the same as a miscarriage. It is intentionally undergoing a medical procedure or ingesting pills to stop a pregnancy.

○ *The fetus is a human being.*

Once an egg is fertilized, that zygote has the same DNA as that person will have when a full grown adult. Nothing changes.

○ *The fetus is innocent.*

It is totally dependent on the mother until birth. It can't make any decisions or do anything on his or her own.

What are the pro-choice assertions? As we saw in the section titled *Truth and Abortion*, the pro-choice position centers around three points:

- ***The unborn aren't human.***
- ***The unborn are human but not persons.***
- ***The unborn are human and persons, but a mother's right to choose is more important.***

It's important that when you are discussing with a person in favor of abortion that you understand which of the three beliefs he holds. That allows you to focus your counter-argument. If the person doesn't believe the fetus is human, you've learned about the scientific, biological facts that prove the fetus is human because the DNA it has will not be any different once he is born.

You've learned that to first ask someone holding the second view, "What then makes a human a person?" The answer will be the fetus can't think or understand at a certain level. Well, the baby one day old can't pass that test, nor can a person in a coma. Is it OK if we kill them?

The biggest issue of course is choice. As we discussed in the *Truth and Abortion* chapter, the pro-choicer must answer the difficult question: Why is my choice more important than a life? This is when you can "trot out the toddler" and ask if her choice will allow her to kill her toddler.

/// ***"Jesus' teaching made some people furious. Just make sure it's your ideas that offend and not you, that your beliefs cause the disruption and not your behavior." - Greg Koukl, Tactics***

As we engage with those who disagree, we can never forget that everyone is created in the image of God. Those who are outside the faith need love. Dr. Jim Denison, a former pastor and founder of the Denison Forum writes, talks and blogs about how the Christian faith must guide how Believers live. He provided an important warning in one of his daily email messages:

/// ***"I am convinced by Scripture that life begins at conception and abortion is therefore a great evil. However, I have never had a daughter with an unplanned pregnancy....This does not make the Bible any less true on abortion. But they should call me to defend that truth "with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15) by "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15) with a deep sense of our shared humanity. I believe that pro-abortion advocates are committing sins I am not committing. But I commit sins they likely do not". Jim Denison 8.28.23***

As a follower of Christ, we all must remember **WHO** we are representing as we engage with those who disagree with us. No matter how important the issue, it's critical that we remember the importance of **HOW** we engage. It won't be easy, but these facts and ideas on how to engage will help you carry forward to all important message of life. A message of life to those made imago Dei, in the image of God.

Apply Knowledge Point

Below you will find three statements that pro-choice people often make. In addition to your argument that the woman is carrying a human being, think about ways you would counter these assertions:

- *If you don't like abortion, don't have one.*
- *If you don't have a uterus, your opinion doesn't matter.*
- *You're OK with abortion if it saves the life of mother.*