
**MODULE
THREE**

STUDENTS IN
ACTION
BUILDING PRO-LIFE LEADERS

**TRUTH
AND
ABORTION**

[*“You formed my inward parts. You wove me in my mother’s womb” - Psalm 139:13*

Some thought that once the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the ruling that made abortion legal in all 50 states and sent the decisions back to the states, that the pro-life battle was won. It’s now clear that the ruling was only the beginning of a new battle for life. Why? The worldviews that ignore the value of all human life have overwhelmed and entrenched themselves in our culture, and in the church. The battleground is at the worldview level. Until the worldviews embrace truth and what that means for life, the political battles will continue to be lost.

We now see how true that is: In the year following that ruling there were more than one million abortions in the U.S., the most in more than a decade. The number is actually higher, because that one million-plus doesn’t include abortions that result from taking abortion pills at home. It’s estimated that more than half of all abortions are now performed with abortion pills (which the federal government has made much easier to obtain). Why more abortions? The easy access of pills is one reason. The biggest reason, however, is that instead of Christ followers spending time and energy working to persuade Americans they should value life, they simply thought politics could solve the problem. “Vote for me and I’ll make sure Roe is overturned!” That was the quick, easy applause line used for years. The tough work of changing the hearts and minds of Americans was too often ignored.

That’s why today the pro-life movement has a big problem: According to the Gallup survey group, more than four out of five Americans believe abortion should be legal at some point in a pregnancy. Related to that is the fact that fewer than four out of 100 Americans hold a Biblical worldview. In fact, that study from Arizona Christian University also showed fewer than half of born-again Christians believe life is sacred, with about the same percentage claiming the Bible isn’t clearly against abortion. So, that bedrock part of our faith, that all men and women are made in the image of God, has not influenced even half of those who profess their faith in Christ.

In the last session, we looked at what truth is and how it is a bedrock of the Christian worldview. As we know, many don’t believe there is such a thing as absolute truth, but rather look at it as simply a preference. The view that moral truth is real and knowable plays a very important role as we engage with an increasingly post-modern world that views everything as relative and that each individual, and not God, should decide right and wrong.

Here is an example of how that thinking can be changed. It's an interview with model/actress Kathy Ireland. Notice how truth changed her mind:

Video: Kathy Ireland

“When I looked at some medical books, and saw the scientific evidence ahead of me. As I mentioned, I was a baby Christian for such a long time. Even though I was a Christian, very pro-choice, I always have and I will continue to fight for women's rights. And so even though maybe I wouldn't have one myself, who am I to impose my beliefs on someone else? It's a woman's body, it's her choice. after all. When I really realized that I was on the fence, I dove into the medical books. I dove into the scientific research. What I learned is that the moment of conception, a new life comes into being the DNA the genetic blueprint is there, the sex is determined, the blood type is determined the unique set of fingerprints is there. And I picked up the phone I called Planned Parenthood. ‘Help me out here. Give me your best arguments.’ And the best arguments were, ‘Well, if you get it, it's just a clump of cells. If you get it early enough, it doesn't even look like a baby.’ ”

What you can never lose sight of is *what* we are talking about: a human being. Kathy Ireland called herself a pro-choice Christian, but struggled because she realized that what is inside a woman is a human being. She reached out to the experts at Planned Parenthood, the organization that performed more than 350,000 abortions just last year, and she said, “Help! I’m confused.” What was the answer from this group? “Oh, it’s only a clump of cells.” Now, the group is certainly correct that all humans are made up of cells. Unlike a “clump”, however, from the very beginning our cells act as a coordinated organism. The group also leaves out, of course, that the “clump of cells” makes up a human being. They now *leave out* that information. Back in 1963, this is what the group wrote in one of its pamphlets:

“Is birth control abortion? Definitely not. An abortion kills the life of a baby after it has begun. It is dangerous to your life and health. It may make you sterile so that when you want a child you cannot have it. Birth control merely postpones the beginning of life.”

Planned Parenthood, and many others, now don’t want to talk about life. The focus is on choice, or “women’s health care”, which is changing the subject! Here is an example from the pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute, which wrote the following before the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*:

“Antiabortion leaders are stepping up their historic campaign to elevate the status of the fetus to that of a child, both in the public's mind and as a matter of law. The purpose of ‘personifying’ the fetus, of course, is to set up an inevitable conflict, conceptually and legally, between a woman's right to choose abortion, as defined by the court in *Roe v. Wade*, and a fetus's ‘right to life.’ ” —Guttmacher Institute

As we see by looking at statistics, a pro-life position is in the minority in America. That’s because the issue moved from life to choice. Once the Supreme Court moved the issue back to the states and took away a blanket right to an abortion, the antagonism against those who stand against abortion has ramped up. If you are pro-life, it is more difficult to be public about your position. That means it’s critical that you understand the core issue and argue persuasively.

/// ***Keep it focused on the child: All humans, made in the image of God, have human value.***

Step one is understanding that there are really only three arguments from those who favor abortion:

- ***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 will help you as you engage with others to know which of the three ideas the person believes. It's also critical that you are armed with the proper information to answer these three key objections to your pro-life position. One of the best books to help explain these positions is Scott Klusendorf's *The Case for Life*. He is one of the nation's foremost experts on the subject, and travels throughout the country speaking to students and debating pro-abortion opponents.

- ***The unborn aren't human.***

The first response is, then what ARE the unborn? As we saw in the Kathy Ireland video, she was told by Planned Parenthood to answer, "a clump of cells." To use a popular phrase, let's "follow the science". As we saw in that animation video, the process comes down to fertilization. This is how one of the top embryology textbooks, *The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology*, puts it:

/// ***"Human development begins fertilization when a sperm fused with an oocyte to form a single cell, the zygote. This highly specialized, totipotent cell (capable of giving rise to any cell type) marks the beginning of each of us a unique individual."***

This is from a textbook, not some pro-life organization! Nowadays, you'll find many pro-choice advocates unwilling to admit even this basic, fundamental fact. It is a human being inside the mom. As Scott famously says, "In short you didn't come *from* an embryo; you once *were* an embryo." If not, what *were* we?

- ***The unborn are human, but not persons.***

Some pro-choice advocates do admit it is a human, but not a person. For anyone with a Christian worldview, there is no difference; 'humans' and 'person' are the same thing. For the pro-abortion folks, it's an attempt to sidestep the fact that they are in favor of killing a human being.

The view is that we are not "persons" until we're able to function at some level of thinking and understanding. This means that since an embryo or fetus can't value their existence, then they don't have a right to exist. In the last section we heard from Peter Singer on his defense not just of

abortion, but of infanticide, killing children after they're born. On his website's "Frequently Asked Questions" section, Singer defines a person as one "*who is capable of anticipating the future, of having wants and desires for the future.*" You can see that if you hold that view of personhood, then it **IS** permissible to kill the very young, the very old, and even those with severe mental illness.

- ***The unborn are human and persons, but a mother's right to choose is more important.***

Many of the pro-choice people you meet won't argue about what is in the womb. They just feel a woman's choice is more important. "My body, my choice" is the frequent chant you'll hear from these advocates. In this view, the woman is the one who controls her body and the human being inside has no rights. This is the natural result of a worldview that rejects the idea of anything outside us—such as God—having the ability to dictate any rules or laws. If I am the one who determines right and wrong, then whatever I want wins!

The first question we must ask these folks: What is the choice? The choice is to have an abortion. That then leads to the next question: What is being aborted? As we've seen, from a scientific view it's clear that the "what is being aborted" is a human being. So then, does that human being in your womb have the same rights you are demanding for yourself? If not, why not? After all, YOU say all that matters is my individual right to decide.

Rights are very important in a democratic republic like America. There are really two types of rights: **legal rights** are those you get through citizenship, for example. Different countries have different rights for their citizens. They are made through the legislative bodies of the country (or, by the whim of the dictator). For example, you have the legal right in America to vote if you're a citizen and 18 years old. Then there are **natural rights**, which are those grounded in the fact that **I'm a human**. They don't depend on the laws, customs, or beliefs of any particular culture or government. For example, the right to live. The fact that some government doesn't abide by this natural right doesn't change the fact that all human beings have natural rights.

The post-modernists (those who don't believe there are moral truths, and that all is relative and objective reality can't be known) cannot duck from the fact that the human embryo which is one week old today will be born in about nine months. The mother is trying to determine the value of the child. So, even if **she** has the **legal right** to kill the unborn baby, the **natural right** that the child has to live does not change. Even if that right is killed.

This is why the "my body, my choice" argument breaks down if the focus is on the baby inside the womb. Yes, it means thinking of more than self. Unfortunately, we see the "me first" trend galloping forward.

This focus on the natural rights in America, which resulted in legal rights changes, was powerfully displayed during the Civil Rights struggle for African-Americans in the 1950s and 1960s.

/// ***“Relativism, which is letting oneself be tossed and ‘swept along by every wind of teaching’ looks like the only attitude (acceptable) to today’s standard. We are moving toward a dictatorship of relativism which does not recognize anything as for certain and which has as its highest goal one’s own ego and one’s own desires.”***
/// **— Pope Benedict XVI**

“Civil rights” is the term that came into wide use as the country came face to face with the reality that the nation was not living up to its promise in the Declaration of Independence: *“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”*

It was a country-changing time, with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. the most visible and powerful leader of the movement. He stayed focused on Scripture and the U.S. Constitution. We are all—black, white and all the races—made in the image of God. This country promises equal treatment under the law.

One of the ironies is that after the Supreme Court made abortion legal in all 50 states, abortion organizations such as Planned Parenthood were more concentrated in black neighborhoods. That irony is not lost on Christina Bennett, who persuasively argues that the pro-life movement is a civil rights issue.

Video: Christina Bennett/ Focus on the Family

“So many people just think of it as a majority white movement, a majority Republican movement, and they don’t fully understand that this is a movement for human rights and for civil rights because without the right to life, which is a foundational right, you have no other rights right now. Abortion is the number one cause of death in the black community. Right now, black women are three times more likely to have an abortion than white women and fighting for the next generation to live and to prosper and to grow. You’re fighting for their dreams. You’re fighting for Harriet Tubman’s dream. You’re fighting for Sojourner Truth’s dream. You’re fighting for Frederick Douglass’ dream.”

The strategy of those who favor abortion is to change the subject and take the focus off what is in the womb. This attempt was on display in 2020, shortly after Roe was overturned, during a hearing in front of the U.S. Senate:

Video: U.S. Senate Hearing

U.S. Senator John Cornyn:

Do you think a baby that is delivered alive has value?

Prof. Khiara Bridges:

Yes.

U.S. Senator John Cornyn:

Do you think that a baby that is not yet born has value?

Prof. Khiara Bridges:

I believe that a person with a capacity for pregnancy has value. They have intelligence, they have agency.

U.S. Senator John Cornyn:

I'm talking about the baby.

Prof Khiara Bridges:

And I'm talking about the person with the capacity.

U.S. Senator John Cornyn:

You're not answering the question.

Prof. Khiara Bridges:

I'm answering a more interesting question to me.

U.S. Senator John Cornyn:

Do you think that the baby that has not yet born, let's say the day before this mother delivers. Do you think that baby has value?

Prof. Khiara Bridges:

I think that the person with the capacity for pregnancy has value and they have the they should have the ability to control what happens to their life.

U.S. Senator John Cornyn:

"I'll just note you refused to answer the question."

It's so important that people understand the truth: *a human being is in the womb*. So, too, must we help this increasingly secular and pro-abortion culture to understand what they are advocating: Personal choice is more important than humanity. How does that square with not only natural law, but the powerful words that helped form this nation? Notice I haven't even mentioned the Bible!

/// *"Truth does not change with our ability to stomach it."*

-author Flannery O'Connor.

/// *In other words, truth doesn't change because we want it to change.*

APPLY KNOWLEDGE POINT

The following story came in the wake of the Dobbs decision, overturning Roe and sending the question of abortion back to the states. How do you answer the state senator's comment from a Christian worldview?

California's state senate is also considering a bill that would create a government fund to help pay for abortions, including for residents from states where the procedure is restricted or outlawed. "We don't want people to have to come here, it is not what we want," said Nancy Skinner, a Democratic state senator who co-wrote the bill. "But we don't want to leave women in desperation and we do not want deaths." WSJ 5.4.22