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Deuteronomy 30:19 “Choose life”

Intro. I wonder how many here today were born after January 22, 1973? Well if you had been conceived to a different mother and in a different circumstance, you may not be here today! That’s because the United States Supreme Court in the now infamous Roe v. Wade decision declared abortion to be a legal right. Since that day, over 40 million babies have been legally aborted in our nation. Truly, the most dangerous place in America is a mother’s womb. Furthermore, abortion has resulted in tragic trauma to millions of mothers. They say, “Legal personhood does not exist prenatally.” Tell that to the lady who wrote these words:

“Nearing forty years of age and after four children, I found myself pregnant. My husband suggested abortion. I knew in my heart it was wrong, I have suffered supreme remorse ever since. Our home has one empty bedroom - a constant reminder! The doctors could control my problem, but nobody can control my hurt and loss of a very precious life that God Himself created. I carry this around now and for the rest of my life this awful memory, the hurt is all mine. You can tell young women who may be considering abortion that a woman never forgets her baby. The memory lives on and on.”

On July 1, 1976, the Supreme Court expanded its 1973 decision by declaring that abortions may be performed on minor daughters without the knowledge or consent of their parents. It is a strange nation in which we are living where an adolescent cannot get an aspirin in a school medical clinic without parental permission, but can have an abortion without such! The 1976 decision also expanded the 1973 decision to allow women to obtain an abortion without the knowledge or consent of the baby’s father. While a father must pay child support in other cases (and rightly so), he is often left with no say as to whether his own child comes into the world or not.

Those who support abortion on demand talk about being pro-choice. Well think about the kind of choice that over 1 million people are making every year. They are choosing death for their unborn babies. Long ago Moses talked about making choices. Yes, God gives you free will. But just because you are free to choose, that does not mean that you and others are free from the consequences of your choices. In our text Moses said, “I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live.” While I acknowledge that this verse does not directly refer to the abortion issue, I do believe it applies.

So to help you make the right choices regarding the issue of abortion, the first point I want to make is this:

## I. WE MUST DETERMINE WHEN LIFE BEGINS

This is the big question in the abortion debate. Dr. James Dobson has astutely observed that “all the abortion arguments descend to whether one believes an unborn baby is a live human being.”

So when does life begin? Some say life begins at birth. They contend that until the baby is out of the womb it is not to be considered a human being, simply a “fetus.” Others say life begins when the fetus has grown and developed enough to live outside the womb if need be.

Consequently, this particular school of thought would say life begins at five to six months. Others say life begins when the baby has a measurable brain wave. The argument here is that the secession of a brain wave marks the end of human life, and thus it naturally stands to reason that the beginning of the brain wave would be the beginning of human life. A brain wave can be measured at approximately six weeks after conception. Still others claim that life begins when the baby develops a measured heart beat. Such advocates thus place the beginning of life at approximately three to four weeks after conception. And, others would say that life begins at conception.

This issue is clearly in the minds of people when they discuss abortion. For example, it is amazing how abortion activists refrain from using the term “baby” for the unborn and instead cling to the less intimate word, “fetus.” It is as though this gives more of an appearance that the baby is simply a part of the mother’s anatomy like a gall bladder or an appendix. It sounds so much better to say the fetus was extracted than to say the baby was killed. The proabortion activist might be interested to know that the word “fetus” is a Latin word. What does it mean in Latin? It is the word for “child.”

So when does life begin? Consider for a moment:

A. The Argument of Science - The abortionist argues that during the embryonic stage of development and in the early stages of fetal development, the baby could not survive apart from the mother’s body. Thus, their argument is that it is moral to eliminate the fetus if so desired. But, the truth is, the same baby could not survive apart from the mother’s care *after* it is born at nine months either. To follow this erroneous concept to its conclusion would be to go ahead and eliminate the baby even after birth.

It is a fact of biological science that the only cell that the mother contributes to the baby is the first one (23 chromosomes) when it meets the father’s cell and they combine. At this point conception takes place, and a new person is formed. All the DNA required for personhood is present. In the cell structure, the baby is as much a part of the father as the mother. Obviously, during gestation the baby is nourished through the umbilical cord by the mother. But the same baby, after birth, is also dependent upon being nourished by the mother outside the womb. After conception, the child receives no new or additional life from the mother. It is not a part of her body that can be removed like a wart or a tumor. It is a unique, individual person.

Life is a continual process, and each of us is a part of it. Some of us are newly conceived. Others are developing in the womb. Some are just born. Others are toddlers in the nursery. Some are in elementary school. Others are adolescents. Some are adults. Others are elderly. But we are all in a stage of gradual development, or in a stage of gradual decline. Man is no more or less a person at *any* stage of this development.

So as we consider the facts of science, I believe we can conclude that a unique human life truly begins at conception.

Not only should we consider the argument of science, but let’s also consider:

B. The Argument of Scripture – I believe that Jesus stepped into manhood, not at His birth at Bethlehem, but at His conception at Nazareth. The Scripture records, “An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, `Do not be afraid to take to you Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 1:20). To Mary, the angel announced, “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a son, and shall call His name Jesus” (Luke 1:31).

Now look with me at Luke 1:41, “And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe [*brephos*] leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.” Notice that the unborn baby, later known as John the Baptist, was called a “babe.” Now if you look down to Luke 2:16 you will see that the same Greek word is used to describe a recently born baby, “And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe [*brephos*] lying in a manger.” And in all the New Testament, this word is used to describe an unborn child twice, and a born child 6 times. It is blatantly clear that God considers an unborn baby more than simply a wad of tissue. He considers the unborn baby as much a human being as the child who is already born and playing, running up and down the street. He uses the same word to identify them both.

Even before conception life is conceived in the mind of God. God deals with us not only after our birth for all eternity, but before our birth and conception from eternity past. To Jeremiah, God said, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations” (Jer. 1:4-5). Yes, life begins even before conception in the eternal councils of God. The great apostle Paul put it like this, “Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love” (Eph. 1:4).

The Psalmist said in Psa. 139:13-16, “For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed....” These words teach, without question, that which is developing in the womb is not a blob of tissue, but an expression of God’s greatest creation, man! It is God Himself at work through the creative processes in a woman’s body when she is pregnant. What other explanation can one give for two tiny specks of protoplasm coming together and developing into all the intricacies of the nervous system, a circulatory system, a respiratory system, a digestive system, etc.

What is the bottom line for you? What do you believe? Is that a human life in the womb? Yes, indeed. Thus, if a unique human life is present at conception, as both science and Scripture certainly reveal, then as a Christian there is no such thing as neutrality regarding abortion. In listing the things which God hates, Solomon says one of the things is, “hands that shed innocent blood” (Prov. 6:16-17). Joel, the ancient Jewish prophet said, “Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom a desolate wilderness, because of violence against the people of Judah, for they have shed innocent blood in their land” (Joel 3:19). Why did they become desolate? Because they “shed innocent blood.” Solomon also said, “Deliver those who are drawn toward death, and hold back those stumbling to the slaughter. If you say, ‘Surely we did not know this,’ Does not He who weighs the hearts consider it?” (Prov. 24:11-12a). There was an insufficient outcry from God’s people back in the 70’s when abortion first became legal, as determined by activist judges.

And what about today? You would not pass by on the other side of the street while men and women were taking two and three-year-old children and scalding them to death in hot water and simply keep silent. Yet many in the Church are virtually silent when a child, who by state law is too young to drink alcohol, too young to vote, and too young to drive a car, is at the same time legally permitted to destroy an unborn life and never even notify her parents. What kind of a nation have we become?

Now to help you make the right choice, my second main point is this:

## II. REJECT THE EXCUSES FOR CHOOSING DEATH

Those who support the taking of innocent human life come up with all kinds of excuses and reasons to justify their actions. Let's look at some of them. First, they claim:

A. Freedom of Choice - The battle cry of the pro-abortionists is "Choice." They claim that those of us who are pro-life are trying to take away freedom to choose. Now think about that. We are taking her power of choice? Think about the many choices that are made which lead up to so many convenience abortions on demand. Consider the choices a particular lady has already made. Should I go to the singles bar? And she makes a choice - yes! Should I flirt with that man at the bar or not? And she makes a choice - yes! Should I go out with him or not? And she makes yet another choice - yes! Should I have sex with him or not? And she makes a choice - yes! Should I have sex without any protection or birth control? And she makes another choice - yes! And then she becomes pregnant! And then *she* begins to scream that we are trying to take away her freedom to choose. She chose all right, and what is now in her is a live human being. Once you make a series of bad choices, and life begins, you have lost your right to choose death for your child. Two wrongs never make a right. She should not impose her moral choices on her unborn child! And this is a significant factor leading to abortion. Eighty-three percent of women who abort their babies are unmarried.<sup>1</sup> Most have chosen to engage in illicit sex and are essentially using abortion as a means of birth control. Should they be given the right to chose death for their child, to cover up their bad choices? No!

The pro-abortionists also say:

B. Don't Impose Your Morality on Me! – Yet these same people use government schools, where many children are forced to go, to impose their situation ethics morality on students. In our classrooms, modern sex education is perpetrated upon our children, without any religious basis for moral restraint. They don't have any problem imposing religion-free morality on our students.

These people hold up signs saying, "Don't impose your morality on me." Do pro-abortionists really mean this? They believe in imposing an opposition to sex discrimination, which is a moral issue. They oppose racial discrimination, which Martin Luther King opposed, and quoted the Bible to prove it. If it is right to fight for equality and civil rights for ourselves, it is hypocrisy not to do so for those who cannot speak for themselves. Surely they oppose murder, stealing, and bearing false witness in court. Yet these moral issues come right out of the Ten Commandments! How hypocritical can these men and women be who carry around signs saying - "Don't impose your morality on me!" If it is right to fight for animal rights, then we certainly should fight for the rights of unborn human life.

Morality is the strength of any nation. If America falls, it will not be the result of a weakened military, but the result of a weakened morality. Of course we need military strength, but more than that we need moral strength and fiber. America's hope is in a genuine repentance. God said, "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins and heal their land" (2 Chr. 7:14).

The pro-abortionists also say:

C. Abortion Is Legal; Therefore It Is Acceptable - But just because something is legal does not mean it is moral or right. Once it was legal in this country to own slaves. But that did not make

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<sup>1</sup> Kenyn Cureton, "Standing For Life," *SBC Life*, January, 2005.

it right! Yet what did slave owners insist about their slaves? They were fully human, and yet they called them non-persons. They possessed no legal rights. The Supreme Court at one time upheld that view. Today, it is legal to kill babies in the womb, but that doesn't make it right any more than slave laws made slavery right and morally acceptable. Abortion advocates are similar to slave owners in the sense that they are fighting for their rights and are ignoring what should be the legal rights of others. Thank God that good and moral people took a stand against slavery!

One woman who has lived through years of the trauma of an abortion wrote, "If abortion had not been legal, I would not have had to live through those dark years of depression."

Furthermore, they claim that:

D. At Times Abortion Is Best for the Child – Abortionist always cite the hardship cases, which really only make up 7 percent of all abortions that take place in America.<sup>2</sup> Let get rid of the 93%, and then we can talk about the hardship cases.

But consider the following from nationally syndicated columnist George Will, and see what you would decide. Here is the case. "The father has syphilis, the mother tuberculosis. They have had four children. The first one was blind. The second one died. The third one was deaf and dumb. The fourth one had tuberculosis. The mother is now pregnant with her fifth child, but is willing to have an abortion. If you determine she should, she will do it. What would you decide for her? If you chose abortion, congratulations! You have just murdered Beethoven!"

If abortion continues to remain legal in America, what will be the next class of humanity to be legally and systematically destroyed? Will it be the mentally retarded? Perhaps the handicapped? Certainly, we are already seeing signs that the elderly and bed-ridden are next in line. Euthanasia is the Siamese twin of abortion. If the pro-choice advocates argue against bringing "unwanted children" into the world, how long do you think it will be before they begin pushing "unwanted elderly" out of the world?

Furthermore, they claim that:

E. Abortion Protects the Health of the Mother – While it is generally true that abortion may provide less *physical* risk than childbirth to the mother, even so here in America the physical risk of childbirth is very low. Furthermore, abortion increases the risk of infertility. And there are 2 other facts not being considered. First, abortion always injures and kills an innocent child. Secondly, we have more than one facet of our being. We are not just physical beings, but emotional and spiritual.

One lady in a Baptist congregation had an abortion at the age of twenty as a result of premarital sex with her boyfriend, who is now her husband. She says, "It has been over ten years and I still feel the pain and loss of it as if it were yesterday.... It was especially difficult when I began to think how old my child would be and wondered what he or she might have looked like and been like. Time has a way of healing so many emotional scars, but abortion is a scar that is carved on my heart. And I don't think time will ever change it completely!"

So abortion does not protect the overall health of the mother. It damages the emotional health of so many women, not to mention the spiritual health of so many.

So considering all that I have shared with you, what should we conclude?

### III. CHOOSE LIFE!

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<sup>2</sup> Kenyn Cureton, "Standing For Life," *SBC Life*, January, 2005.

God has made us as “free moral agents” with the ability to choose for ourselves. But do you realize that the choices you make effect you and everyone around you? Moses made it clear that the choices we make will result in life or death, blessing or cursing. This ought to stimulate and challenge you to make wiser choices according to God’s Word in regards to everything you do.

Will you make the right choices? We must admit that in many cases our track record isn’t all that good. We have the tendency to choose death over life, a curse over blessing. Proverbs 14:12 says, “There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.” This problem goes all the way back to Adam & Eve. We need to start making better choices in life. And you can start by learning God’s Word, and obeying God’s Word. You can’t go wrong choosing to go God’s way. Yet, according to a recent (2005) Barna Research Group national survey, just one out of every six adults (16%) claim they make their moral choices based on the content of the Bible.

For those of you who may face pregnancy sometime in your future, what will your choice be? Here is my challenge to you, based on all that I have said so far:

A. Choose Life for Your Unborn Child - Could you murder your child on its first birthday? Of course not! That would be the farthest thing from your mind, and so should aborting the child while he or she is in the womb. There is a human being inside you. God already has plans for that child and He is in the process of perfecting him or her. Don’t buy the argument that the child is an “unwanted child.” There are many couples right now trying to adopt. Please do not do something you will regret the rest of your life. Do not destroy something that is not yours. The child in your body ultimately belongs to God, even though it may be in your womb at the present time. Please do not take an innocent life for your own convenience sake!

Choosing life for your unborn child can be a very tough choice in some situations. A certain lady went from village to village peddling her wares. Frequently on her journeys she would come to a fork in the road and would have to decide which road to take. She had a strange method for making her decision. She would take a stick, toss it into the air, and follow whichever path the stick seemed to be pointing to after it hit the ground. On one such occasion, the lady was seen tossing the stick into the air repeatedly. A curious passerby asked what she was doing. She explained her process and said, “The stick keeps pointing to the left fork and I wish to go to the right.” That’s what we do sometimes as we try to make tough choices. The path we know we should be choosing is God’s will, but we keep throwing the stick up in the air until we get the result we want. For example, we ask advice from people we think will give us the answer we *want* to hear. We do not ask the preacher, or our parents. Make the right choice. Choose life!

Many of you will not personally face a difficult pregnancy. What should you do about this message?

B. Choose Life for Other Unborn Children – We must do something about this problem. James 2:26 says, “faith without works is dead.” If we believe abortion is wrong, we should do something about it. We need to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves. Isaiah said it best 700 years before the coming of Christ when he said, “Cry aloud, spare not; lift up your voice like a trumpet; tell My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins” (Is. 58:1). Isaiah was saying, get involved!

Volunteer to serve in the local pregnancy support center. There is a bulletin insert that will give you more information.

The real battlefield is the place of prayer. Fall on your knees and pray to Almighty God that He will change our hearts and the direction of this nation that has launched out into a sea of innocent blood. Pray for those organizations which stand for the life of the unborn. Pray for legislators, judges, and others who will make life and death decisions regarding the issue of abortion.

We must work the political process to end this travesty. Vote for presidential candidates who will appoint pro-life judges, and sign pro-life legislation. Vote for senatorial candidates that will affirm pro-life judges. Vote for state legislators that will vote for any limits to abortion that will be permitted by higher courts. Write your Congressmen. [Visit [www.faihandfamily.com](http://www.faihandfamily.com), enter your zip code, and follow the prompts]. Sign petitions. All of this political involvement will take time and patience, but we must be willing to keep at it until abortion is largely ended here in America.

The Christian politician William Wilberforce stood against the deeply entrenched political and economical interest in England's slave trade. He stood as well against the courts that held that slaves were nothing more than property. Despite the overwhelming opposition, Wilberforce and a small band of like-minded Christians persisted. They prayed for three hours a day, circulated antislavery literature, mobilized churches and citizens groups, and in the end they triumphed with a glorious victory that stamped out the slave trade in England. But what was not so glorious was the fact that their campaign took twenty years. They were defeated time and time again in the House of Commons. They were lampooned in political cartoons, and snubbed by society's elite. But they persisted and righted the tremendous wrong.

The battle against legal abortion on demand has lasted for 33 years here in America. We must not give up. We must continue the battle. We have made some gains. Most Americans are morally opposed to abortion on demand for any reason. Many children have been saved from death by the pro-life voice of many.

Finally, let me challenge you regarding one more choice:

C. Choose the Life of Forgiveness - To the many who have had abortions, please remember that abortion is not the unpardonable sin! Many live with guilt and grief. The grief you feel is normal. You should thank God that your conscience is not seared. The good news is that Jesus Christ died on the cross to make a way for you to be free of your failure and saved from your sin. Along with our sins He also bore our sorrows and grief, our mistakes and failures. How beautiful are the words of Paul in Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." God hates sin, but He loves you! He stands with open arms to forgive you. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). If you have aborted a child, God will forgive you right now if you ask him. You can purpose to follow Him, accept His cleansing, and then not call unclean what He has cleansed. You can forgive yourself!

Sources: Robert AuBuchon (notes from his sermon on this text); Kenyn Cureton, "Standing For Life," *SBC Life*, January, 2005; O. S. Hawkins, *Good News for Great Days* (Dallas: Annuity Board, SBC, 2001), 20-47; Larry Pierce, *Online Bible* [CD-ROM] (Ontario: Timnathserah Inc., 1996). Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982).