

The Lives of the Innocents

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All Scripture references are from the New International Version of the Bible, unless otherwise noted.

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Foreword

Our hope for this short but important book is that God will be pleased to use the power of the Truth in it to save thousands, and perhaps millions, of precious unborn lives. And that they, themselves spared from untimely deaths, will give their lives in His service for their great nation – to reach millions of others with the same truths of redemption and love that saved them and gave them hope and an eternal inheritance. To this end, we commit this volume to the power of His Spirit!

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Preface

Lives of the Innocents is about the precious lives of the unborn. It was originally intended as a resource for training leaders in China and therefore contains references and statistics related to China.

Christian leaders in China face a tremendous challenge in teaching and encouraging believers torn by this issue. There is a profound tension between living in faithfulness to God and obedience to the government (Acts 5:29). Very few lives have been untouched by the tragedy. The book also gives the biblical message of grace and forgiveness for those who have faced abortion: mothers, as well as fathers and grandparents.

Christian attitudes toward government and those who have suffered the trauma of abortion need to be shaped by the truth of God's Word. This is true for China and for the Western world as well. For that reason the publishers felt that the book should also be made available in English.

It is our prayer that this book will be an encouragement to believers everywhere.

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THE LIVES OF THE INNOCENTS

Chapter One: THE HOPE OF FORGIVENESS AND HEALING IN JESUS

A Christian leader shares this testimony¹ of ministering to a woman in the aftermath of abortion:

When my wife and I were planting a new church over 35 years ago, we made friends with a believing lady who began to associate with our little flock. She was a dedicated and passionate follower of Jesus. Judy (not her real name) was a 30 year-old single mother of two sons and she had come to faith in Jesus after a painful and tragic divorce. She was filled with the Spirit of God, dedicated to prayer and study of the Scriptures, and active in serving our Lord Jesus in many practical ways.

One day she asked to come to our home to share something she had weighing on her heart. We sat in our living room to listen carefully and prayerfully to her story. We welcomed the Holy Spirit into our circle as we began the conversation. She had come to trust us as her spiritual leaders and she bravely and vulnerably opened her heart to us. We were so privileged by God to be there for her on that fateful day.

Judy shared her story. After her divorce and shortly after her conversion to Christ a few years before, she became involved with a married man who was not a believer and they conceived

¹ The testimonies found in this book may have names changed and minor details altered to protect the identity and privacy of the people involved.

a child out of wedlock. She broke off this relationship shortly after she learned of her pregnancy. None of her friends in her fellowship knew about her extra-marital sexual affair. She determined to not tell any of her believing friends and secretly arranged to have an abortion to avoid the social complications of what she had done.

Throughout the following years Judy was tormented by guilt and shame over her compromise before God. Though she confessed her sin to the Lord over and over and even grew spiritually, she continued to be terribly oppressed by the condemnation of the devil and the humiliation of her past sin. Judy found it easy to believe that God had forgiven her for all the sins of her past except for the ones related to this event in her life. This was the terrible burden about which she opened up to us that day.

As we were waiting on God in prayer after her confession, I recalled the account of King David when he committed adultery with a married woman, Bathsheba, and she conceived a child. However, rather than confessing and repenting from his sin of adultery, he added sin to sin and made an arrangement out of his kingly power for Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, to be killed in battle. David was now guilty of not only adultery, but also murder (2 Samuel 11).

As we recounted this story to Judy that day, she realized that the great King David, a man after God's own heart and highly esteemed (1 Samuel 13:14), had been guilty of the very two sins that she had committed. We also rehearsed how God inspired and sent the prophet Nathan to wisely and lovingly appeal to David's conscience and lead him into repentance and restoration before the Lord (2 Samuel 12:1-14).

We took the time to read Psalm 51 together in which David confesses his sins openly to God and celebrates the full cleansing of the tormenting guilt and shame that David experienced on the heels of his sexual sin and his murderous scheme to cover it up.

Psalm 51

*For the director of music. A psalm of David.
When the prophet Nathan came to him after
David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.*

- ¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
according to Your unfailing love;
according to Your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.*
- ² Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.*
- ³ For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.*
- ⁴ Against You, You only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in Your sight;
so You are right in Your verdict
and justified when You judge.*
- ⁵ Surely I was sinful at birth,
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*
- ⁶ Yet You desired faithfulness even in the womb;
You taught me wisdom in that secret place.*
- ⁷ Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.*
- ⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones You have crushed rejoice.*
- ⁹ Hide Your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquity.*
- ¹⁰ Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*
- ¹¹ Do not cast me from Your presence
or take Your Holy Spirit from me.*
- ¹² Restore to me the joy of Your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.*
- ¹³ Then I will teach transgressors Your ways,
so that sinners will turn back to You.*

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- ¹⁴ *Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,
You who are God my Savior,
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.*
- ¹⁵ *Open my lips, Lord,
and my mouth will declare Your praise.*
- ¹⁶ *You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
You do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.*
- ¹⁷ *My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart
You, God, will not despise.*
- ¹⁸ *May it please You to prosper Zion,
to build up the walls of Jerusalem.*
- ¹⁹ *Then You will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous,
in burnt offerings offered whole;
then bulls will be offered on Your altar.*

The Holy Spirit gave me a clear impression about Judy. It was as if she was reaching her arm into the heavens to the very throne of Christ. She was slapping Him in the face again and again and saying, “Jesus, I know that your blood is precious enough to cleanse me for all my sins, but I’m sorry...I must continue to punish myself for adultery and abortion...these two are just too terrible for You to so freely forgive.”

When I shared this with Judy, she realized how such a misguided belief and attitude truly dishonored Christ and the great value of His shed blood and His loving sacrifice for us on the cross. I relayed to her that God actually was *commanding* her to both *receive* and *enjoy* the forgiveness and cleansing that He had provided for her and that she would be breaking His heart if she continued to punish herself for her past compromise.

This different viewpoint put conviction and courage into her heart and Judy was gloriously delivered that very hour from the horrible torment of soul and mind and the accusations of the devil that she had suffered under for so many years. To this day she is a vibrant

believer who serves the Lord Jesus with all her heart and bears much fruit for the glory of her King.

Maybe you have, or someone you will minister to has, been involved in abortion. This is the case with millions of people all over the world. It is often important and powerful to not only confess our sins to God, but also to one another, as prayerful witnesses, to release the healing of God into our souls and bodies. If you continued to be burdened by guilt and shame over your past sins (especially the ones you deem to be most grievous), even though you have already confessed them to God, consider also humbly confessing them to a trusted fellow believer.

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. (James 5:16)

I pray that this testimony will empower you to settle any remaining matters of your past sins in the sight of a loving, merciful and forgiving Savior, Christ the Lord of all.

This leader's testimony shows the value of listening with compassion to those who are facing an abortion or are suffering as a result of abortion. We do not merely advocate against abortion, but we actively promote the power of redemption to bring hope and healing. For those who are facing a decision about abortion, we want to present the good purpose of God and promote life.

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Chapter Two: LIFE IS PRECIOUS

The Value of Human Life

Of all the judgments we might ever make about good and evil, it is those that are related to life and death that are the most urgent and important.

One of the filters for choosing what is right is what we value. A number of issues about right and wrong are deeply connected to what value we place on human life. Murder is one of those issues, and so is suicide, along with mercy killing, abortion, birth control, care of the disabled, end-of-life medical care, self-defense, warfare, capital punishment, torture, and slavery. Even the matters of animal rights and vegetarianism relate to how we esteem human life in contrast to animal life.

Some of these issues involve a conflict between the value of the individual and the good of the society. Often one life seems to struggle against another life: which life should be protected and which one should be ended? Capital punishment (execution) calls for the sanctioned ending of a life in judgment for some crime “worthy of death.” For example, from ancient times it has been a moral standard that one who commits murder deserves the penalty of death (Gen. 4:8-15; 9:5-6).

And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.” (Genesis 9:5-6)

Views of Human Life

Fundamental to resolving questions about human life is the way we view life. If we see life as nothing more than meaningless chemicals that respond to stimuli, a product of evolution over hundreds of millions of years, then a national leader, a disabled person, or a factory worker – or a garden slug, a fly, a rat, or a tree – are all the same. None has any particular dignity or value by nature.

From this naturalistic perspective, human life has no value. The only significance that can be assigned to any living thing is the degree of contribution made to the whole. In this case, a beautiful and majestic tree could be seen as having greater value than a deaf and dumb newborn baby. Endangered whales or snails would have a greater “right” to protection than people in need of food or shelter. In this naturalistic view of life, there is nothing that has any absolute value.

Others see all living things of equal value. Everything is a part of the whole, and all life is inter-connected. This is the view of many who embrace new-age religions and of those who attempt to retain some spirituality while holding to naturalistic evolution. For some, everything is God; everything living is a part of the divine, an emanation or extension of the mystery of deity. But in that case, a tree or an ant is as much the “divine” as any human. In fact, some apply this view of God to inanimate things as well, to the earth itself, the oceans, and the air.

In the Bible, life is from God, and it is extended by God to things outside of His own being. God is not His creation. The true sense of a created thing is that it now exists as something “other than” the Creator (Gen. 1:1-2; John 1:1-2).

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. (Genesis 1:1-2)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. (John 1:1-2)

There are things that do not have life and things that do have life (Gen. 1:20-25). And then there is a special kind of life possessed by those beings created in the image and likeness of God – the human race (Gen. 1:26-31; 2:7; Jam. 3:9²).

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, in Our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Genesis 1:26-27)

Life is from God

God, who is the Ruler of all, is the One who bestows life and who alone has the right to take life away.

- God is the origin of life in animals (Gen. 1:20-21, 24; Ps. 104:27-30³).
- God is the origin and source of the unique life of humanity in the image of God (Gen. 2:7; Job 10:9-12; 33:4⁴; Eccl. 5:18; 8:15; Isa. 42:5⁵; Zech. 12:1; John 1:1-4; Acts 17:25-28).
- God gives life as a good thing to be enjoyed (Eccl. 5:18⁶; 9:9; Rom. 8:32; 1 Tim. 6:17⁷).
- God warned that death would be the penalty for sin (Gen. 2:16-17).

² ... [Men] have been made in God's likeness. (Jam. 3:9)

³ When You send Your Spirit, they are created, and You renew the face of the earth. (Ps. 104:30)

⁴ The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life. (Job 33:4)

⁵ This is what God the Lord says – He Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, Who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it.... (Is. 42:5)

⁶ Then I realized that it is good and proper for a man to eat and drink, and to find satisfaction in his toilsome labor under the sun during the few days of life God has given him—for this is his lot. (Eccl. 5:18)

⁷ Command those who are rich...to put their hope in God, Who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. (1 Tim. 6:17)

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- God is always fair and just in His determination to end life (Gen. 6:17).
- God abhors the shedding of innocent blood and decrees that one who takes a life should be punished (Gen. 9:5-6; Num. 35:34; Deut. 27:25; Prov. 6:16-17; Rom. 13:1-4).
- God has ultimate control over life and death (Deut. 30:19; Job 1:21-22; 2:6; Jonah 1:14; John 10:17-18).

The conclusion of the matter is that God alone has the right to take life since He alone is the One who gives life (Deut. 32:39; Job 1:21; 1 Sam. 2:6).

See now that I Myself am He! There is no god besides Me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of My hand. (Deuteronomy 32:29)

Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised. (Job 1:21)

The Lord brings death and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and raises up. (1 Samuel 2:6)

In the original creation, everything was “very good” and there was no death or suffering (Gen. 1:31). As a result of sin, the whole human race became fallen and broken (Gen. 3; Rom. 5:12, 21; 1 Cor. 15:22). Now the whole of creation is deficient, and we all fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). In His rule over life, God ordained that suffering and death would be the punishment of sin (Rom. 6:23).

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

Implications of God Being the Source of Life

Because God is the Author of life and created mankind in His own image, human life has special significance and meaning. Mankind was the pinnacle of creation, having dominion over all the works of God's hands; in particular, every living thing of the earth (Ps. 8:4-9).

What is man that You are mindful of him, the son of man that You care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of Your hands; You put everything under his feet. (Psalm 8:4-6)

The fact that Jesus came as a man (Gal. 4:4; John 1:14; Heb. 2:148) shows the high regard God placed on humankind. God created man with value and dignity (Matt. 10:31⁹; Jam. 3:9) The human race is of such value to God that the Son of God came into the world to lay down His life to save us from our sins (Matt. 20:28; Luke 19:10; John 3:16-17).

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost. (Luke 19:10)

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. (John 3:16-17)

God has a special care for human life above all created life (Ps. 104:14; Luke 12:7). He has put in mankind the desire to care for others, a quality that is frequently in conflict with the selfishness of our sinful nature. Jesus told a story about a man who was attacked by robbers and received care from a stranger, the "Good Samaritan" (Luke 10:30-35). Even animals seem to care for the injured among them, and the maternal instinct is

⁸ God sent His Son, born of a woman, (Gal. 4:4) The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. (John 1:14) Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity... (Heb. 2:14)

⁹ So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. (Matt. 10:31 w. Luke 12:7)

quite marked as well. A distinctive characteristic of humanness is the way we care for our sick and disabled. Human societies seek to care for those who are sick or injured, often pooling their efforts to seek cures for disease and to fight against epidemics.

People everywhere care about human life. Governments provide police to protect against violent crime, and they raise armies to defend themselves against foreign invasion. People will work together to find shelter from storms or to prevent floods and fires. They try to anticipate natural disasters like earthquakes, volcanoes, or tsunamis to minimize injury or loss of life. People do not want to die; they want to live. People do not want to see others die; life is important.

One of the first recognized crimes in human society was murder, the willful taking of another human life. Cain killed Abel (Gen. 4:8-15). From earliest times, God decreed that murder should be punished, a life for a life (Gen. 9:5-6). Human life must be protected and preserved. Nearly all societies, including the most godless, recognize murder as a horrible crime.

Even among the cruelest of humans, we observe a respect for life to some degree, at least for their own life! Everyone seems to have a survival instinct. They want to breathe and will fight for air when deprived of it. People seek to quench their thirst and satisfy their hunger so that they will stay alive. Everyone wants to avoid dangers: poisonous snakes, hungry animals, auto accidents, murder, drowning, falls from buildings or cliffs, disease, warfare, storms, earthquakes, fires. Why? They value their own life at least (Eph. 5:29¹⁰). God commands us to value the lives of others and to love them as we love ourselves (Lev. 19:18; Mark 12:31; 1 John 3:16¹¹).

In all cultures, there is a deeply seated concern to preserve and perpetuate life. One generation seeks to preserve humanity in the way they care for

¹⁰ After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church. (Eph. 5:29)

¹¹ Love your neighbor as yourself. (Matt. 12:31) We ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. (1 John 3:16)

the next generation. The maternal or parental instinct – the desire to look out for the well-being of our own children – is common to all of mankind (Matt. 7:11).

If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him! (Matthew 7:11)

Death and Immortality

Any loss of life brings an inner wrenching. Jesus groaned at the tomb of Lazarus even though He was about to restore life to him (John 11:33-36). We know inwardly that life is precious, and the end of a life is painful to us (Ps. 116:15).

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. (Psalm 116:15)

Humans extend respect and dignity to others even in death. In secular science, one of the criteria in anthropology for establishing the humanness of the earliest man is in the respectful treatment of the dead and burial with memorial objects and some form of ceremony. All over the world and throughout history, a recognized trait of human culture has been the dignity of the deceased.

Human life even in death has a unique dignity. We often see in diverse cultures a shared expectation that there is beyond this world some sort of afterlife and conscious existence after death. In the Bible, we see respect for the dead and the hope of life after death from the earliest days (Gen. 23:1-13; 25:8, 17; 35:16-20; 37:34-35; 47:9; 49:29-33; 50:1-14, 24-26; Job 7:1-2; 19:25-27).

I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see Him with my own eyes – I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me! (Job 19:25-27)

People from all cultures seem to have an innate awareness that there is a greater reality than this mortal life. This is because God created us for fellowship with Him (1 John 1:1-3¹²). A yearning for connection with the invisible, and with the Creator is common in widely separated societies. Our imaginations about the “other world” cannot be escaped. We know that the way we think about these things makes us unique in the created world.

EXERCISE: Research ancient traditions of your own culture. What were some of the early beliefs about the “other world” and life after death? Consider buildings and architecture that point to ideas about immortality.

Divine Standards Concerning Life

There is in all of us an awareness that we should not do wrong things and that we should do what is right, with an expectation that we will one day answer for how we have conducted our lives. We have a sense of accountability and duty to the righteous standards of God. From our earliest childhood, we know full well when we have been mistreated, and we know then that it is wrong for us to mistreat others. We know that it is good to treat others as we ourselves desire to be treated (Matt. 7:12).

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

The Bible shows that we are expected to do what is good (Prov. 24:11-12; Rom. 12:9, 21; Jam. 4:17¹³). We are to refrain from evil (1 Pet. 3:10-12; 3 John 11¹⁴).

¹² And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:3)

¹³ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. (Rom. 12:9) Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins. (Jam. 4:17)

¹⁴ Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God. (3 John v. 11)

God requires that we care for the lives of all people because we are created in His image and likeness (Gen. 1:26-28; 9:6; Jam. 3:9-10). We are accountable to God and will be judged according to what we do in this life, whether good or evil (John 5:28-29; Rom. 13:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 John 3:10-16; Rev. 20:1-15).

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. (Revelation 20:12)

God's specific command was written with His own finger on the Tablets of Stone He gave to Moses (Ex. 31:18). That command is plain: You shall not murder (Ex. 20:13), and it is repeated by God a second time through Moses (Deut. 5:17). The command is echoed and strengthened by Jesus, who instructs us to avoid even the anger that might lead to murder (Matt. 5:21-26). After the Cross, Paul includes the command against murder as one of the things summed up in loving our neighbors as ourselves (Rom. 13:8-10).

...he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. (Romans 13:8-10)

Murder and the shedding of innocent blood will always be abhorrent to our holy and righteous God (Deut. 19:13; 21:9¹⁵; 27:24-25; Ps. 106:37-40; Pr. 6:16-19; Is. 59:1-8; Jer. 22:1-5).

¹⁵ ...purge from yourselves the guilt of shedding innocent blood. (Deut. 19:13; 21:9; Jer. 22:3)

They shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters ... They defiled themselves by what they did ... Therefore the Lord was angry with His people... (Psalm 106:38-40)

But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear. For your hands are stained with blood, your fingers with guilt... Their deeds are evil deeds, and acts of violence are in their hands. Their feet rush into sin; they are swift to shed innocent blood. The way of peace they do not know; there is no justice in their paths. (Isaiah 59:2-7)

It is not just murder that is wrong. Inflicting pain and torture, and causing greater suffering to our fellow humans is inhumane and also an abomination to God and brings a curse (Deut. 27:18-19¹⁶). Not only are we to refrain from destroying or harming the lives of others, we are to preserve life and extend comfort to others, showing kindness to our fellow-man (Ex. 23:4-11¹⁷; Ps. 15:1-5; 82:1-4; Luke 6:9¹⁸).

Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked. (Psalm 82:3-4)

Jesus reveals that godly love involves care and concern for the physical well-being of others, even strangers (Lev. 19:34; Luke 10:25-37). To love our neighbor means to care for whoever is in need wherever and whenever we might encounter him, as illustrated in the story of the “Good Samaritan.”

Everyone is expected by God to care for the needs of the poor and downtrodden (Job. 29:12; Prov. 14:21; 24:11-12¹⁹; Luke 14:12-14). This

¹⁶ Cursed is the man who leads the blind astray on the road..., who withholds justice from the alien, the fatherless or the widow. (Deut. 27:18-19)

¹⁷ ...do not put an innocent or honest person to death, for I will not acquit the guilty. (Ex. 23:7)

¹⁸ Then Jesus said to them, “I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?” (Luke 6:9)

¹⁹ He who despises his neighbor sins, but blessed is he who is kind to the needy. (Prov. 14:21) Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. (Prov. 24:11)

care for others is an evidence that the love of God dwells in us (1 John 3:11-19; 4:10-12).

But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous. (Luke 14:13-14)

We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death.... This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in His presence. (1 John 3:14, 16-19)

This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us. (1 John 4:10-12)

The high and holy God makes Himself known by showing kindness and mercy to the lowly (Rom. 9:14²⁰, 22-24; Eph. 2:4-7; 3:7-11). Because God is high above all nations and His glory is above the heavens, He always shows kindness to the lowly, and we should too (Deut. 10:12, 17-19; Ps. 113; Is. 57:15).

*The Lord is exalted over all the nations, His glory above the heavens.
Who is like the Lord our God, the One who sits enthroned on high,
Who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth?
He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap;
He seats them with princes, with the princes of their people.*

²⁰ I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. (Rom. 9:15)

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*He settles the barren woman in her home as a happy mother of children.
Praise the Lord. (Psalm 113:4-9)*

*For this is what the high and lofty One says – He who lives forever,
whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with
him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the
lowly. (Isaiah 57:15)*

Those who have received such goodness and love should, in turn, be a display of God’s greatness by showing mercy and kindness to others in need (Jam. 1:17-27). The Lord requires that we have great regard for the lives of others – not just in refraining from murder, but in showing kindness and mercy (Micah 6:8). Our attitude toward human life must always be an expression of the love of God. We should love others as God has loved us (Eph. 4:32).

*Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to
look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself
from being polluted by the world. (James 1:27)*

*He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord
require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly
with your God. (Micah 6:8)*

*Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just
as in Christ God forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32)*

Chapter Three:

THE CHOICE FOR ABORTION

A young woman is glad for her mother's choice against abortion. She shares her story:

I consider myself a survivor. My mother gave birth to me when she was just 17 years old.

The common recommendation to a pregnant teenager is to have an abortion. There is no doubt in my mind that my mother faced great pressure when the news of her pregnancy came to light. I can't imagine the fear and anxiety she experienced. Fortunately, in spite of being abandoned by my father, she had family that stood by her in her decision to give birth.

I escaped being aborted. So what does that mean for me today? It means I look upon life with the eyes of one who might have never experienced it. I reject the notion that unborn children should be destroyed because they are inconvenient. I certainly was not convenient for my mother. However, I did not deserve to be destroyed. And I'm glad my mother made the choice not to destroy me.

My childhood was far from easy. My mother went through several different kinds of addiction and our home life was very unstable. I was often left in the care of people who were at best mediocre caregivers, at worst downright abusive. Even so, I'm still glad she gave me life. I experienced abuse on many levels. I have seen the ugliest of people. I have felt pain and suffered emotional hurt that no child should ever experience. Does that mean my life should've been ended? No! Look at me now.

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I have been married 14 years and I am the mother of four children ranging in age from 7 to 13. My children are beautiful, intelligent, and happy. They bring great joy to people and are very productive.

My husband and I, while not having a perfect marriage, have made our life together. We know the meaning of love, and it's not the halfhearted mushy stuff of pop culture. It's doing what is necessary to help move the other person forward and lift one another up. Ultimately, I feel that is what my mother and her parents gave to me: a sense of commitment and responsibility.

When I was much older, my mother briefly mentioned that she once had an abortion. What a wide range of emotions I went through when she told me that! I struggled with anger at my mother for destroying life. I felt remorse at not having known this sibling of mine. I suffered some survivor's guilt. But as I went forward I began to sympathize in a whole new way.

My mother must have experienced unfathomable pain. I cannot imagine pain so great that I would take the life of my unborn child. Having had my own children, I can't see taking a life like that. Her pain and pressure must have seemed too great to bear.

I am a survivor. Not only am I survivor, I am a conqueror by God's grace. I was able to overcome a lot of adversity to build a good life for myself. Some say that when an unborn child has the prospect of a low quality of life or poverty or abusive situations, the child is better off aborted. But I am proof that these are not valid reasons for destroying a child.

I am a survivor. And because I survived, my children are here today. That is life's legacy. For that choice made so many years ago, I am grateful. My mother, with the help of her parents, chose life for me.

What is Abortion?

In medical literature, *abortion* refers to any termination of a pregnancy prior to live birth. In this discussion, we are addressing choices about right and wrong, so we are not dealing with any spontaneous miscarriage, whether due to the pre-natal death of the unborn child or caused by an injury or disease or complications in a pregnancy. In this examination of choices, we use the term *abortion* to refer to any intentionally induced miscarriage, the decision to willfully remove the baby from the womb, thereby ending the child's life.

Regard for Human Life in Chinese History

Daily in China, 35,000 babies are killed by abortion. That adds up to nearly 13 million in a year's time! In addition, millions of abortion pills cause innumerable undocumented deaths of unborn babies.

Many unauthorized clandestine burial grounds have sprung up in close proximity to abortion facilities; the grief of millions of Chinese women is profound, and results in rampant depression and misery.

EXERCISE: What are the attitudes toward abortion in your culture and in the history of your society? What can you learn by cautious investigation of ancient law codes? Write down your findings.

Prior to the Han Dynasty (before 206 BC), abortion was viewed as homicide. In the Tang Dynasty (AD 618 -906), it was still a crime to cause abortion by assaulting a pregnant woman, and women who injured themselves to cause an abortion were liable for punishment.

There was a gradual erosion of homicide laws, due to an overemphasis on respect for parents and elders, to the extent that even infanticide (the killing of a child by a father) was no longer considered a crime! However, the fact that it was permissible for fathers to kill their children

can be seen as a clue that mothers were not permitted to kill their children, unborn or not.

Laws and traditions originating in the Song Dynasty (AD 960-1279) implied that the unborn had some degree of recognition as humans. In this dynasty, a distinct difference was made in speaking of “procured abortion” (*duotai* – now called *rengong liuchan*) in contrast to a miscarriage (*xiaochan*).

Throughout much of the Song Dynasty, statutes against assault did place a greater value on the life of the woman than the unborn baby, but there was no sense at all that that baby was less than human. The baby in the womb was always regarded as a life under imperial law. For example, if a pregnant woman died, it was always treated as a matter of “one corpse, two lives.” Further, a female convict carrying a child could not be executed until 100 days after giving birth!

Early in the twentieth century, there were criminal codes against women who had abortions, those who performed abortions, and those who caused miscarriages. At the present time, principles of Buddhism treat abortion as an act of killing. Cultural attitudes prevalent in some regions of Asia reflect a disapproval of abortion, and as a result, in some of these areas women rarely obtain abortions, even when “services” are available for free.

It was not until the early 1950s that abortion even became legal in China, and now it is common with the One Child Policy.

Abortion is Death

Abortion is killing an unborn baby. However, there have been quite a number of cases where late-term efforts at abortion have ended in a live birth, and the child lived to tell the story. Seldom are these survivors advocates for abortion. Hundreds of abortion survivors are telling their stories all over the world.

Cassie's mother had an abortion in the seventh week of her pregnancy. She went for a routine checkup five weeks later and found out that there was still a baby in her womb. She had been carrying twins! Cassie had survived. Her mother carried her to birth and then gave her up for adoption.

Cassie did not learn her story until she was 14 years old. She gave the name "Carrie" to her unborn sister, and often wonders what it might have been like to grow up together. She began to share her story with friends and now speaks to groups about choosing life. As a teen, she firmly believes every unborn child should have the chance to live.

In most cases, the unborn child is killed while still in the womb, and then forcibly removed. However, it is not uncommon for the underdeveloped baby to be removed early from the womb while still alive, but the helpless infant is unprepared for life outside and so dies. Even worse, sometimes after being removed from the mother, a living child is killed by direct action of the abortionists!

Justifications for Abortion

How can the killing of an unborn child be justified? For some, their logic says that the unborn baby is not really a person. To reinforce this understanding, those who favor abortion never speak of an "unborn child" or a "baby" in the womb, but rather an impersonal "fetus."

Constant manipulation of language has produced the attitude that what is removed from the mother is a thing that is less than human, other than human. The more impersonal term "fetus" is used to distract the mind. Abortionists will never speak of killing a baby or removing a child from the womb. Always the preference is to use technical sounding medical language. They view the killing of the baby as a routine medical procedure to "terminate a difficult pregnancy."

Another technique is to talk about "women's health issues" or "birth control." These euphemisms (nicer sounding words to disguise something

that is unpleasant, distasteful and ugly) disguise the terrible reality that they are really talking about killing an innocent baby. The baby is treated as a mere extension of the mother, like scar tissue or a malfunctioning organ, such as an appendix that needs to be removed. It is as if the “procedure” is no more serious than the removal of a wart or mole.

Others appeal to some supposed value, the “right to privacy,” to claim that women have rights over their own bodies, perpetuating the myth that this mass of tissue removed from the womb and allowed to die is not a true human being, but a part of the woman’s own body.

Yes, there are those who favor abortion, even though they know full well that the termination of a pregnancy is the killing of an unborn child. Even in such cases, there is still an effort to treat that baby as having less value than the mother’s comfort and happiness or less value than the good of the whole society.

Yet those who choose abortion seem to find some comfort in thinking that the little one in the womb is not quite the same as those of us who are living. Ultimately, the justification of abortion is based on viewing the unborn child, the “fetus,” as subhuman.

Chapter Four: BIOLOGY AND THE BEGINNING OF LIFE

Life Begins at the Moment of Conception

Modern medicine confirms that the life inside the womb is a child!

Advances in medicine now make it possible to perform surgery on an unborn child. Modern testing methods enable doctors to determine blood type, DNA information, gender and genetic traits. Ultrasound imaging enables us to see the form and movements of a child from the first trimester of pregnancy. Abortion proponents desperately try to prevent prospective “clients” from ever viewing any image of their unborn baby.

Christian friends persuaded Janice to get an ultrasound before going through with the abortion she had scheduled. Even at six weeks, she saw that this was not merely a mass of tissue but her baby! She canceled her abortion. Once she saw her baby, she realized there was no way she could go through with an abortion.

The stages of development of the child in the womb show that at the moment of conception, a new life is formed. A biological eruption begins at the instant the sperm and the egg are united. This is a unique human being, not a mere mass of tissue that is a part of the mother.

- From the moment of conception, that new life has its own genetic code, its own unique DNA derived from the contribution of both mother and father. The baby possesses the genetic information that determines gender, which will be different from that of the mother about half the time. Genetic traits are established for his or her blood type, hair color,

eye color, eventual height, and a host of other physical traits. Even elements of personality are encoded in the child from this beginning.

- Within the first month of life, the heart begins beating and the head, legs and arms of the child appear.
- In another month, there is a heart pumping blood of the baby's own particular type. Bones begin to form, as well as nose, ears, toes, fingers, and eyes. There are unique fingerprints; organ systems begin to function, and nerve tissue develops, along with detectable brain waves and sensitivity to touch.
- In the third month, the baby becomes self-conscious, engaging in kicking, grasping, thumb-sucking, swallowing, squinting, swimming and squirming. This little baby can now feel pain. Babies aborted at this stage are in agony as they are being killed.
- By the fourth month, the child has grown to about half of what he or she will weigh at birth. The little one can hear the mother's voice and begins to develop that first connection of relationship to another person.
- In the fifth month, the child has complete skin, hair and nails. The baby is sometimes awake and sometimes asleep – the baby can dream. The child is not fully developed, and only half way to full-term, but this is a person, a real human being who could survive and live if born at this point. Abortions are often performed at this stage. When the baby could be born alive, he or she is killed instead. In the womb, the baby is silently screaming and kicking as those dreams are ended, and the already growing relationship with the mother is snuffed out by an untimely death.

The baby at birth does not suddenly change into a person after being less than a human for the previous nine months. It is the same child, who at birth recognizes the voice of the mother as the same voice he or she heard while in the womb.

Simple biology indicates that from the time of conception – the union of the male sperm and the female ovum – the life growing in the womb is not the mother and is not the father. The DNA comes from both the father and the mother. It cannot be claimed as merely

a part of the mother's body, but is a new individual based on genetics. At conception, each parent contributes 23 chromosomes to the full human complement of 46. The new person has 46 chromosomes unique to that particular human being. The baby is who he or she is and will be.

Fred and Irene were so happy when their 16-year-old son Eric found a job working in a fast food restaurant. The assistant manager was a 22-year-old woman who began a sexual relationship with the boy. His parents were shocked when he came home and informed them that the woman was pregnant.

They worked through the initial reaction and decided that they would support Eric and the baby. They determined to be the best grandparents possible. A couple of weeks later, Eric informed his parents that the problem was solved; the woman had a "miscarriage."

Does Eric know what really happened? Do his parents know what happened? Whether the miscarriage was accidental or induced (an abortion), these prospective grandparents are left to grieve over the grandchild they will never hold. Sadly, the mysterious ending of a pregnancy through a sudden "miscarriage" is not an uncommon occurrence.

The life that begins at fertilization is a new life that is other than the mother and other than the father. This is not only true of humans, but of any organism. This is not some odd ancient notion or religious dogma, but it is the observed conclusion of the most up-to-date science of medicine.

Arguments against the Humanness of an Unborn Child

Certain physical characteristics are used by some to define humanness or personhood. By citing lack of these features, unborn children can be defined as nonhuman or merely “potential humans.” Many comfort themselves in the killing of these babies by saying that because they are not yet born, they are not yet human.

- Some claim that breath is the beginning of human life; because the unborn are not yet breathing, they are therefore not yet persons. But are drowning victims who have stopped breathing no longer human? If they are revived by CPR, do they become human again? Are those who have died no longer human?
No, they are indeed humans – dead humans, but human nonetheless. Humans continue to be humans even when they stop breathing (Phil. 1:23; Rev. 6:9²¹), so there is no reason to think they are not yet humans because they have not yet started breathing.
- Another argument is that the lack of self-consciousness of the “fetus” indicates that “it” is not yet human, since humans by definition are self-aware. So then, if an athlete suffers a concussion and loses consciousness from a fall, is he no longer human? Will the coach seek to revive him and restore his humanness so he can compete in another event?
- A “person” must have a brain and brain function, and since in early stages the fetus lacks a brain, then, some say, it is not truly a “person.” However, a person who is brain-dead is still a person. Even a full-term unborn child can be without a brain – a condition called anencephaly. But the lack of a brain does not make such a child anything other than human. It is biologically impossible for a man and a woman to conceive anything other than a human

²¹ I desire to depart and be with Christ. (Phil. 1:23) I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God. (Rev. 6:9)

child. Moreover, any child's brain is not yet fully developed until about age 25. Regardless of age, a child in or out of the womb is still human.

- Others say an unborn child is not human because it could not survive on its own. This makes no sense since many adults, and even productive members of society, rulers or scientists, often have disabilities that make them dependent on others. And of course, though a newborn cannot survive without care – needing to be protected, fed, cleaned, and changed – there is no doubt that the little gurgling and cooing infant is a human being. All who help in giving care are tenderly aware that the little one is fully human. Likewise, even though they are fed through the umbilical cord while in the shelter of the womb, the unborn are fully human.
- Another contention is that the “thing” is still a part of the mother as long as it remains attached in the womb. Even if the “thing” is a boy? The little boy has his own heart, his own mind, his own senses and he can hear the voice of others, including the voice of his mother.

The child, from the moment of conception, has unique individual genetic coding and DNA. Indeed, the womb is a part of the mother but is like a nest for another true person to grow in and develop, in order to eventually go on living in the world outside, breathing the air like the rest of humanity. The youngster in the nest is just as human as the mother, but the baby is not the same person as the mother.

- Some babies do not have the usual 46 chromosomes. It is argued that if the fetus does not have 46 chromosomes, then it cannot be considered “human.” However, if the child is the result of a conception between a man and a woman, then he or she is human – nothing more and nothing less. And even though some humans have an abnormal chromosome count, they can still dance and sing and laugh, whether 45 (Turner's syndrome) or 47 (Down's syndrome).

The number of chromosomes is not the determining factor for humanness. For example, the sable antelope of Africa and the

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Reeves' muntjac of southeastern China both have 46 chromosomes. The fact remains, once conception has taken place, the full allotment of chromosomes is present, and whether that is 45, 46, or 47, the baby is a human and not any other creature.

Chapter Five: THE BIBLE AND THE BEGINNING OF LIFE

Misuse of Scripture to Deny the Humanness of an Unborn Child

Some people try to use the Bible to defend the killing of the unborn. One passage often appealed to is from the Law of Moses, which is misread as follows:

If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her [equated with aborting the child], and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine.

And if any mischief follow [if one of the men dies, or if the woman dies], then thou shalt give life for life. (Exodus 21:22-23, KJV – as interpreted by abortionists)

Those who favor abortion twist this passage to mean that the injury of the woman resulted in miscarriage. “That her fruit depart from her” is taken to mean the death of the fetus. And since the penalty for the supposed miscarriage was not death (v. 22), then, it is argued, the fetus was not seen as a life. This interpretation intends to point out that capital punishment (a “life for a life”) is not carried out, so therefore the abortion is not the taking of a human life.

However, any reliable translation shows that this is not at all the sense. First of all, the word fruit is *Yeled*, that is, “child.” And then the word depart is *Yatsa'*, that is “bear” or “give birth.” Plainly, this passage says and means:

If men are fighting and injure a woman who is pregnant, so that her child is born prematurely, and yet no harm results [the baby is healthy and lives], he [the man fighting] shall be punished as appropriate, according to what the woman's husband imposes.

But, if any harm results [the child dies or is stillborn], then you shall give life for life. (Exodus 21:22-23 – direct translation from Hebrew)

So, when this passage is examined as it is written in the Bible, it is a very strong support for recognizing the full humanity of the unborn child. This Scripture solidly promotes the protection and defense of the baby's life. Clearly, in the Bible, if someone caused the death of an unborn baby, the penalty would be death – a life for a life.

Biblical Passages Showing the Humanness of the Unborn

Many passages in the Bible show that from the moment of conception we all had our beginning as humans, even when we were not yet fully formed (Ps. 51:5; 139:13-16; Jer. 1:5). The unborn baby is a person who is known by God, and who has a calling and destiny in the purpose of God.

Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. (Psalm 51:5)

For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well. (Psalm 139:13-14)

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations. (Jer. 1:5)

In the womb is a true child who can be filled with the Holy Spirit and leap for joy (Luke 1:15, 44²²). The twins of Rebekah are called

²² [John the Baptist] will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb. (Luke 1:15) ... the baby [John the Baptist] in my womb leaped for joy. (Luke 1:44)

“children” while still in the womb, and they participate in actions of personality and self-recognition as they “struggle” even before birth (Gen. 25:21-23²³)!

Difficulty in child-bearing is one of the results of the Fall – when Adam and Eve sinned (Gen. 3:16). Our response should never be to kill the child that has been conceived, as if to avoid any problems that might be connected with bearing a child. Regardless of any complications that may accompany a conception, in every case, what is formed in the womb is a child, a true human person.

Here is a summary of ideas from Scripture that shows the unborn are fully human. Make use of this list by looking up the references in your own Bible.

1. People are called by God even before birth (Gen. 25:22-23; Judg. 13:2-7; Isa. 49:1, 5; Gal. 1:15²⁴).
2. God knows those who are not yet born while in the womb, just as certainly as He knows those who are born. He knows the little person in the womb intimately and personally (Ps. 139:15-16; Jer. 1:5).
3. Gender (male and female) is established from conception (coded in the genes and chromosomes) and is an aspect of the unique creation of mankind by God (Gen. 1:27).
4. The terms “child” and “children,” are used of those in the womb (Gen. 25:21-22; Ex. 21:22; Judg. 13:7; Luke 1:41, 44), exactly the same language as is used of those who have been born: infants, young children, and sometimes even adults (Gen. 25:19 cf. v. 22; 1 Kings 17:21 cf. 3:17; Luke 2:12, 16).

²³ The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, “Why is this happening to me?” (Gen. 25:22)

²⁴ ... God ... set me apart from my mother’s womb and called me by His grace. (Gal. 1:15)

5. Personal pronouns are applied to persons yet in the womb (Gen. 38:27-30; Jer. 1:5; Matt. 1:20-21²⁵) just as any other human being.
6. The unborn are formed by God (Ps. 139:13), just as God formed Adam and Eve in His image (Gen. 1:27; cf. 2:7).
7. Unborn children have distinctly human characteristics, for example, joy (Luke 1:44) and sinfulness (Ps. 51:5).
8. The unborn are living humans since they are capable of expiring – giving up the spirit of life while yet in the womb (Job 3:10-11; 10:18-19).
9. Causing the death of an unborn child was seen as the taking of a human life, and as such was punishable by death, “a life for a life” (Gen. 9:6; Ex. 21:22-24).
10. The Incarnation of the Son of God shows that a full human being exists from the moment of conception (John 1:14²⁶; Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:26-27, 31).

The Incarnation of the Son of God

The Incarnation of the Son of God began when He was placed in the womb of Mary, not at His birth. The *Logos* was made flesh, or human, and became the “God-man” at the moment He was conceived in Mary’s womb (John 1:14; Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:26-27, 31). His humanity began when He was not yet born.

You will be with child and give birth to a Son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus. (Luke 1:31)

²⁵ The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a Son, and they will call Him Immanuel – which means, “God with us.” (Matt. 1:23)

²⁶ The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. (John 1:14)

In the Incarnation, God took on human flesh, placing Himself within the limitations of the material created realm:

The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. (John 1:14)

...being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man... (Phil. 2:7-8)

The Son of God was sent from above and came down from heaven (John 3:11-17, 31; 6:29-33, 38; 8:23²⁷). The humanity of Christ commenced not at His birth, but from the moment He was found in the womb of Mary.

²⁷ For I have come down from heaven... (John 6:38) You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. (John 8:23)

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Chapter Six: MOTIVATIONS FOR ABORTION

“It’s Human; So What?”

The hardened abortionist will often brazenly admit, “It’s human; so what?” This callous attitude is the product of a naturalistic view of life, based on the mindset of evolution: a human species totally devoid of any dignity as the unique and purposeful creation of God. Humans are just chemicals that happen to be alive, responding to stimuli. A garden slug, or a tree, or a human are meaningless.

For the Christian, when we recognize that the unborn are indeed fully human, then the discussion is over. Killing a child is never the right thing to do.

Jennifer married young against her parents’ wishes. When she found she was pregnant, her husband wanted her to have an abortion. He felt a child would prevent them from achieving their financial goals. He constantly told her, “We can’t afford a child. You are being selfish!”

He also made fun of his wife as she gained weight. He distanced himself from her emotionally and physically. Gradually they became estranged and Jennifer discovered that her husband was involved with another woman.

In her determination to give birth to her child, Jennifer left him to find a place of support. She moved to a different part of the country to be closer to her parents. A beautiful daughter was born happy and healthy.

Though Jennifer struggles with guilt over the father’s accusations and her child’s separation from him, every day she is thankful for her child. Jennifer chose life and the little baby girl is her great delight.

Some would still argue in favor of abortion even while fully recognizing that we are talking about a human life. While there is an admission that a child is being killed, yet they somehow convince themselves that the baby being killed is of less value than those already living. Or they hold to other things as more precious and more important than the life of a less significant little sprout of humanity, so full of hope and promise.

Rape and Incest

A conception that has occurred as a result of rape or incest does not result in anything less than a person. Killing an unborn baby is still wrong, and does not undo the evil of the rape or incest. The baby, who has been granted life, is not responsible for the actions of either parent (Ezek. 18:19-20). To murder the baby only adds to the sin, and now makes the victim of the crime guilty of another crime, “heaping sin upon sin” (Isa. 30:1).

King David committed the sin of adultery, and then tried to cover the sin when a child was conceived. Though he did not try to kill the baby, he did end up having the woman’s husband killed, and then quickly married her in an effort to hide the sin (2 Sam. 11 w. Ps. 51). Trying to fix one sin by committing another sin is never an effective solution.

Deformity and Disability

A child conceived with a disability or birth defect is still a child. Killing a human is wrong. God has never given man the responsibility to produce a pure strain of humans, a super-race, or perfect specimens of humanity. Disposing of the disabled before birth adds to the horribly mistaken notion that those living among us who are disabled are of less value as humans.

There were no birth defects or deformities in the “very good” world of the original creation (Gen. 1:31). The entire creation became subject to death, pain and brokenness only after the Fall into sin (Gen. 3:1-16). God

allows groaning and pain in the human race for His own purposes (Rom. 8:18-23; 2 Cor. 4:7-18; 5:2-5).

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the One who subjected it in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. (Romans 8:18-23)

... We do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (1 Corinthians 4:16-18)

Those who are handicapped and the parents of those who are handicapped are seldom promoters of abortion. In fact, disabled persons often make great and notable contributions to the good of society. Further, the achievements of the disabled, whether small or great, inspire all of us to do our best to overcome challenges in our own lives.

God often uses the weak and feeble to show His power in contrast to those who seem to be strong. God also shows the power of His love through those who extend mercy and kindness to the visibly weak and disabled (1 Sam. 2:2-9²⁸). David was seen to be a good and godly man in the way that he cared for Mephibosheth, the lame son of his friend Jonathan (2 Sam. 4:4; 9:6-13).

²⁸ He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap... (1 Sam. 2:8)

Sometimes God allows sickness so that He can display His power in miracles of healing. Jesus healed a man who had been born blind (John 9:1-38). God used the disciples to display His power by healing people who were lame from birth (Acts 3:2-10; 14:8-18). God often allows weakness to show His almighty power (2 Cor. 12:9-10; 1 Cor. 1:25-31).

But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

... God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things – and the things that are not – to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before Him. (1 Corinthians 1:27-29)

One of the reasons for the mystery of imperfection is to provide an opportunity for the wonder of God's perfection to be seen in those who show kindness to the suffering. A ray of hope shines brightly in the midst of darkness. As we show compassion to those who are in need, we display God's heart of mercy and kindness (Acts 20:35; Gal. 6:1-2; 1 Thess. 5:14).

... By this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus Himself said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:1-2)

And we urge you, brothers..., encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. (1 Thessalonians 5:14)

Natural Miscarriages Used to Justify Abortion

It might be argued that since miscarriages often occur naturally to “end a pregnancy,” then it cannot be wrong to end a pregnancy by abortion. This argument blurs the distinction between a willful act of killing and that dreadful tragedy of a spontaneous death. It might be said that since our neighbors’ houses sometimes burn down by accident, then that would justify my setting their house on fire to kill them, so that I could take ownership of their fields and vehicles! This is absurd and wantonly selfish.

The loss of a baby in a miscarriage is not parallel to abortion. Likewise, willfully taking the life of any unborn child is not at all parallel to an inability to bring a living child to birth in a tubal pregnancy. Protecting and preserving life is our responsibility according to the commands of God, but there is no expectation that we can succeed in preventing every natural death. God appoints a time for all persons to die (Heb. 9:27²⁹).

While we are not morally obligated to stop every death, we are obligated to refrain from willfully causing the death of an innocent person. On rare occasions there is only a choice to preserve life by taking a life. When the mother’s life is in danger, the situation becomes a true dilemma of choosing what is right. Prayer and the support of the church family must be constant and abiding as prospective parents struggle through such challenging issues.

Further, those who suffer a miscarriage bear no moral responsibility for the death of that unborn child. Many prospective mothers, and fathers as well, suffer untold mental agony and anguish of heart over a baby that has been lost before birth. They blame themselves, even though they were not at all responsible for the death. However, the death was not their own doing, but allowed in the sovereign plan of God. They need to be delivered from this unholy condemnation and guilt (Rom. 5:1-2; 8:28-39).

²⁹ ... Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment. (Heb. 9:27)

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Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us. (Romans 5:1-5)

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose... What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? ...Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns?

Christ Jesus, who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: “For Your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:28, 31, 32-39)

Self-Centered Motivation

God cares about individuals. He wants each person to come to Him in faith (Gal. 2:20³⁰), being persuaded in his own heart (Col. 4:6; 1 Pet. 3:16). The New Testament encourages personal freedom and individual convictions (Rom. 14:5). However, apart from Christ, the idea of individual liberty becomes selfish disregard for others (Gal. 5:13).

In the materialistic and self-centered cultures of the West, the emphasis of value may be placed on personal pleasure, self-gratification, indulgence, individual pursuit of happiness, privacy, career, maintaining a youthful body, possessions, athletic achievement, the use of child-endangering drugs, freedom from the restraints of parenting, or totally unrestrained sexual activity.

There is a presumption that a woman “has rights over her own body.” This reasoning leads to the preposterous notion that she should be allowed to eliminate anything or anyone who interferes with the sovereignty over her own life! A woman may actually choose to kill a baby so that she will be able to compete in some athletic competition, or simply because she wants to continue pursuing a promiscuous lifestyle.

Abortion is considered as merely an option for birth-control. There is in this way of thinking a callous disregard for the rights of that living person who seems to be such a drag on the woman’s freedom – the little unborn baby!

Others will recognize that the unborn child is human, but they value a boy over a girl baby, so if gender is discovered through prenatal examination, sometimes a daughter will be killed. Or if the baby appears to be “less than perfect,” perhaps with a deformity, genetic defect, or disability, then the parents may elect to kill the child. They have placed a greater value on an “ideal baby,” rather than simply esteeming all human life of supreme value.

³⁰ I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave himself for me. (Gal. 2:20)

Li Shong went through three abortions over several years after she learned that the unborn babies were girls. She and her husband wanted a boy for their “one child.”

They waited several years for the next pregnancy. When it did not occur, they had Li Shong examined by a doctor. To their dismay, they learned that she was no longer physically capable of conceiving children. Their grief strained their relationship, which ended in divorce. Her husband remarried and became the father of a baby girl.

Li Shong is now a believer. She knows she is forgiven, but she struggles with guilt over killing three baby girls. She also faces the painful reality that she will never have children. It is only as she is reminded of God’s forgiveness and love that she has hope for the future.

In most societies, the parents lay down their lives for their children, and would willingly die to see the lives of their sons and daughters preserved. Strangely, it is these very children, for whom so much sacrifice was made by their loving parents, who are now choosing to kill their own unborn babies.

Benefit of the Many

In some cultures, the predecessors and ancestors are exalted, and the descendants or successors are more expendable. In many of these settings, the preservation of national identity takes precedence. The good of the whole society is uppermost and of higher importance than individual rights – almost exactly opposite to the motivations of the West. In societies which emphasize good of the whole, the collective is supreme. The State has rights and interests that supersede those of the individual. No individual has any value, except as a contribution to the whole. So if an unborn child is perceived to be a drain on the community, then the child must die for the betterment of all.

Somehow, most modern and civilized governments are more comfortable with killing unborn babies than going through a village and slaughtering

a few hundred incompetent individuals or the elderly. But one wonders, if our concern is to control the population, why not just kill off the older children who are delinquent or not doing well in school?

Many nations with large and booming population growth are concerned about controlling the birth rate for the good of the society. However, abortion is not good for society. It devalues life. There are other options besides abortion.

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Chapter Seven: RESPONSES TO THE ABORTION CHALLENGE

A Chinese sister shares her journey from living in fear to resting in God's love.

I became a Christian and was baptized in October 1999, when my daughter was 3 years old. Six months later I was shocked to find that I was pregnant again. I didn't want to accept this reality because of all the hardship this would bring.

For one thing, our national family planning policy was very strict so we would need special permission to have a second child. Secondly, to have a second child would mean that I'd lose my job. Besides this, we had just moved into a rented flat which was owned by the director of the local Residential Committee, and her job was to oversee the implementation of the national family planning policy.

I didn't know how to pray. I kept telling God, "This can't be true. Please help me!" However, it was a reality!

I consulted my pastor. She told me that it would be a sin to pursue abortion, because life is from God, and only He has the right over life. Although I didn't have much knowledge of the Word, I believed God's Word must be true. Out of fear of God, I decided to keep the baby.

Every day for me was a trial – physical discomfort, weakness of my faith, financial difficulty, and the strict warning of the Residential Committee director. These were like huge mountains on my

shoulders. On top of that, I was also rejected by my parents. My mom refused to answer my phone calls during my pregnancy and even until after the baby was born. I struggled with deep pain and shed many tears before the Lord.

Sometimes during the night we could hear the police knocking on doors to force pregnant women to the hospital to get abortions. Those were sleepless nights for our family.

One day, as I wept again before the Lord, I suddenly saw a vision in my mind: my husband and I were sitting there with two children between us, and our whole family was praising God together! This vision became a great encouragement for me for the rest of my pregnancy. I believed it would be just as the vision showed, according to what God said. And Hannah the mother of Samuel was my great example (1 Sam. 1).

In the coming months, God opened amazing doors for us. In a very special way, we obtained the birth permission by the local Residential Committee, and we were even spared of any fines. I gave birth to a healthy baby boy.

When our baby was one month old, my husband gave his heart to Jesus. He said he saw God! Thank God! Today, we are a family of praise. Both our children love the Lord. Our son is a great comfort and encouragement to us. His life is like a pillar, reminding us of God's boundless grace and infinite power. To love the Lord is my choice for as long as I live.

Conflicts with Government Authority

Christians should avoid placing themselves in the situation of being involved in abortion, even when mandated by governments. For example, in some countries those in the medical profession are required to perform abortions to maintain their job. Another difficulty is that school teachers might be expected to provide abortion counseling for young children

or teenagers and to hide the fact from parents! Probably the most challenging situation is when citizens are subjected to forced abortions!

Christians must prayerfully choose to obey God rather than man (Acts 4:19; 5:29³¹). We must refuse to participate in the senseless and brutal slaughter of unborn children. How far we should go in raising an outcry against the policies and how much we should work to reform the society is another subject for another setting. But here, we need to settle the fact that ultimately it must be our decision as individuals that we will never willingly have a part in any abortion.

The biblical expectation for righteousness and godliness is directed toward individual believers and churches, not to the unbelieving society. Christians are called to conduct themselves in a Christlike manner toward the surrounding culture, including government. In some cases government policies may oppose Christian principles. Yet, believers are always called to respect governing authorities (Rom. 13:1-2; Tit. 3:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:13).

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. (Romans 13:1-2)

Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. (Titus 3:1-2)

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. (1 Peter 2:13-14)

³¹ We must obey God rather than men! (Acts 5:29)

How do we relate to authority when we are expected to cooperate with abortion, to participate in it, even to the killing of our own unborn child? One option might be to physically flee. But for most, that is not possible or within the calling of God. However, it would be an entirely moral and godly choice to avoid conception in the first place, whether by abstinence, or by some acceptable means of non-abortive birth control. This is not necessarily ideal, since children are a blessing from the Lord, but it seems a better option than conceiving children when we are aware that abortion will be demanded by the state!

Birth Control

Abortion as a means of birth control is always wrong, and thus birth control is always wrong if it results in the death of a child that has been conceived. But it seems obvious that preventing a conception in the first place (by non-abortive birth control) is always a good thing if it prevents the killing of the unborn! So, birth control can be a perfectly legitimate course of action to avoid killing a child by not conceiving in the first place.

We certainly value the blessing of God in providing us with children, but we also value human life and despise the killing of human life. Murder is the taking of human life, but preventing a conception is not the ending of a human life, rather exercising some control over whether a human life begins.

However, birth control would be wrong if the continuation of the human population were threatened. For a couple to refuse to help the population to grow and multiply as needed would be a case of evading the general command of God for the race to be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1:28).

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it..." (Genesis 1:28)

In addition, birth control is wrong for believers when the motivation is simply to avoid the inconvenience of children. When children are despised as an interruption to the selfish pursuit of our own carefree

lifestyle, then it would seem that birth control would be an expression of the lust of the flesh rather than the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-25).

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery... I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Galatians 5:16-23)

Birth control is often used by unmarried persons to avoid pregnancy while engaging in promiscuity. This moral impurity is wrong (1 Cor. 6:13-20; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5-6; 1 Thess. 4:3-7³²). God designed sexual expression exclusively for marriage and He ordains that children come into the world within the legitimate marriage relationship. Biblically, children are to be part of a family – a husband and a wife living together in love and a life-long commitment to cherish and serve one another, as together they nurture their own children.

The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. (1 Corinthians 6:13)

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. (Ephesians 5:3)

Outside of marriage, the best way to avoid conception is through moral purity and abstinence from any sexual activity (1 Cor. 7:1; 1 Thess. 4:3-8). However, within the context of marriage, total abstinence from sexual activity is not a reasonable option (1 Cor. 7:2-5). Marital intimacy

³² See Appendix A for Scriptures on Sexual Immorality and Moral Purity

has other important purposes besides procreation, purposes which are invaluable to a healthy marriage (Prov. 5:18; 1 Tim. 6:17; Eccl. 4:7-12; Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5-6; Eph. 5:22-33³³).

Even within a society where there is no threat of mandated abortion, birth control can still be a legitimate means for pursuing the Kingdom of God. Perhaps a couple is called by God to be involved in some important work of ministry that would be helped by delaying child-rearing. For the sake of the Kingdom of God, some people have a “gift” to be unmarried (Matt. 19:12; 1 Cor. 7:7). And likewise, even those who are married may choose to forego the blessing of children for a season in order to devote themselves to some mission of God.

Moreover, we are responsible to provide for our own households (1 Tim. 5:8³⁴), so within that context, birth control may be appropriate in considering the cost (Luke 14:28³⁵). Even where there is no restriction on the number of children allowed in a family, birth control may still be appropriate to provide spacing between children, easing strain on the mother for the sake of her health, both physical and mental.

Non-abortive forms of birth control (those which prevent conception), in the appropriate circumstances, can be a noble and godly means of avoiding that horrible situation of being required by law to kill an unborn baby. However, any birth control method that “terminates the conception” is simply another form of abortion and involves the killing of a child.

Voluntary sterilization (vasectomy in males or hysterectomy and tubal ligation in females) is an option that seems to be superior to forced abortion! However, such a decision is quite serious, and one should consider whether or not in some future setting there may be a desire to become a parent. Although tubal ligation and vasectomy can sometimes

³³ See Appendix B for Scriptures on Sexual Expression in Marriage

³⁴ If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. (1 Tim. 5:8)

³⁵ Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? (Luke 14:28)

be “undone” or reversed, generally such procedures are permanent. Anyone considering a sterilization procedure should pursue this course of action only with much prayer and godly counsel.

Obeying God Rather than Man

Birth control methods are never 100% effective. Should a conception occur in a situation where the government would subsequently require an abortion, it seems disobedience to the laws of man (Acts 4:19; 5:29³⁶) would be the right choice, in order to avoid committing murder!

In Egypt, the enslaved Israelites were ordered to kill newborn baby boys. But the people feared God and chose to let the boys live. Next there was a mandate that baby boys were to be thrown into the river, but they feared God and refused to comply, trying to hide their babies. God was pleased with those who honored Him in their effort to preserve life (Ex. 1:7-22).

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, some wise men from the Orient came to worship Him with costly gifts. The wicked king felt threatened and planned to harm the baby Jesus. However, the wise men were warned by God, and did not reveal the location of Jesus. The angry king ordered that all the baby boys in the area be killed. The parents of Jesus fled with their child for protection to Egypt. When the family returned, they again hid from another evil king (Matt. 2:12-23).

Here, in the present day, those who want to follow the will of God will place supreme value on human life. Rather than killing an unborn child, they would resort to flight and hiding and paying fines, willingly facing opposition and ostracism in order to preserve life.

³⁶ We must obey God rather than men! Acts 5:29

Helping Those who Choose Life over Death

Within the Christian community we need to come alongside and give help to those who have chosen against abortion. It is not enough to oppose abortion. We must also step up and help the parents and their child before and after the birth. Those who choose life should have confidence that the believing community will support them in their decision.

The following is a story of the church showing love to a family facing a very difficult birth:

This is the story of my little baby Mercy. As I gaze at my sleeping baby, my heart is overwhelmed with God's tender mercies. I thank my Lord for giving us such wonderful heritage. She is six months old now. Her life is a true wonder of the Lord!

Her big sister Melody is only 15 months older than Mercy. I found that I was pregnant again when Melody was only 7 months. I felt so helpless! We were not planning on having a second baby at all. We were afraid we couldn't afford raising two kids.

I also struggled with fear, because our first child had been born by Caesarean birth. My doctor said it usually takes 3 to 5 years for full recovery after a Caesarean. Another pregnancy after only 6 months is extremely dangerous for both the mother and the new baby. She told me that if I insisted on keeping this baby, I'd be responsible for any medical accident due to the pregnancy.

So many reasons were screaming, "No! You can't keep this baby." However, there was a voice deep in my heart, "Children are a heritage from the Lord. Keep the baby! Do not hurt its life!"

Well, I thought, if the baby is a blessing from the Lord, He will certainly be able to keep me safe. So, again and again, I committed the baby into God's hands. I was determined to keep her till birth, even if that would mean rupture of my womb.

Nevertheless, my husband insisted on the opposite. “What if the baby is born at the expense of your life?” One day, he very seriously asked me to go to the hospital for an abortion; but I insisted I could not. For two months we lived in this tension, yet my heart was filled with fond love for the baby.

In those days, my pastor stood with me, giving me much guidance, care and comfort. Brothers and sisters in my church kept praying for us. Sometimes they’d visit us and try to encourage my husband. He was touched by the love of the Lord shown by the church. Gradually he started to accept this baby.

Day by day, we cast our burden and fears on the Lord. People kept telling me that as the baby grew bigger, my old Caesarean scar would break. They told me to rest and stay away from any household chores. However, I did every kind of housework, though not a great deal. I took care of little Melody, cooked, did laundry, and even mopped the floor. All these activities could have been very dangerous for my condition, but I was perfectly fine all through the pregnancy. My old scar did not worsen, and I never had any pain.

I had my second Caesarean section at 37 weeks. The whole process was very pleasant. God had arranged the best doctor for me. When I first saw the baby, I was filled with thanksgiving. This true and living God is so worthy of trust!

The hospital was far from my home, making it challenging for my husband to get back and forth to take care of me. Brothers and sisters in my church took turns cooking and sending food to me. My every meal was filled with love and grace. The church gave me the warmth, care and help of a family. My husband was so happy to have our baby Mercy. All the fears and problems that he had worried about were resolved so well. He was also deeply touched by the love of my church. Before I knew it, he went to the church and shared his story. He even considered receiving the Lord and baptism. What a great blessing this is for our whole family!

It is God who gives us the capacity to love and show mercy. The church showed me love in my family's time of need and God enabled me to love my baby, even when my own life was at risk. My plea to mothers is to preserve lives and show God's love.

Preserving the Life of the Mother

It is often argued that if the life of the mother would be endangered by a birth, then the "pregnancy should be terminated." Realistically though, with the remarkable advances of modern medicine, this is seldom the case! And often when proponents of abortion speak of protecting the woman's health, they refer to her mental and social well-being. So a "woman's health" often really means her freedom to pursue an independent lifestyle.

In choosing what is right in such a difficult matter, we must first be sure that we have honestly defined the issue. "Preserving the life of the mother," must never mean merely preserving her mental health, or her lifestyle, or her quality of life. This becomes a moral dilemma only when the mother's physical life is absolutely endangered by the pregnancy.

We must face the issue of legitimate cases of saving the life of one person at the expense of another. We think of plaintive stories of a father being forced to rescue one child over another in the midst of some horrible disaster. Which one will he save from the fire, or which one of his children will he rescue from drowning? This is always an impossible decision!

A tubal pregnancy – one in which the newly conceived child does not become implanted within the uterus – always ends with the death of the conceived child, and will likely end both the life of both mother and child. So now it becomes a decision to save one life at the expense of another, rather than simply losing both lives. Here we are not talking about ending a life of a child for selfish and shallow reasons. In most cases of abortion, there is a willful devaluing of human life. However in the case of such a difficult pregnancy, we are seeing human life valued. We face an almost unsolvable and tragic conflict over which life we are

to save. The mother's life can be saved only by removing the baby. That is the stark reality. There is not an option in a tubal pregnancy to somehow save the baby and let the mother die.

Would there be a possibility of removing the fertilized egg and re-implanting in the uterus? Could the baby be transplanted to a surrogate? This could be a field of research for Christians in the medical field to pursue. Could God provide healing and bring about a normal birth?

While medical efforts to prevent death are to be applauded, our best efforts are not going to succeed. We could wish that there were a way for us to stop death from happening, but that victory is reserved for the Lord Jesus Christ at His return when the "last enemy" – death – will be destroyed (1 Cor. 15:22-26). Until then, there is only one cure for the disease of death that afflicts the whole human race, and that is the redemption that is in Christ (Rom. 6:23³⁷).

Preserving the Life of the Unborn Child

If the mother's life truly is in danger, she would certainly have a valid and appropriate right to preserve her life in self-defense (cf. Ex. 22:2).

On the other hand, should it be thought strange that a mother would rather die herself than see her unborn child die? People often lay down their lives to save others who are strangers to them, so it is certainly not out of the question for a mother to sacrifice her life to save that of her very own child!

For example, one mother chose to forgo needed cancer treatments that would kill her unborn child, during her pregnancy. Shortly after the healthy baby was born, the mother died. This godly mother chose to die to allow her child to live.

³⁷ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 6:23)

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It seems that many have made the snap judgment that without question, the life of the mother should always be given precedence. However, for many cultures the priority would be given to raising up descendants and preserving the family line.

Among royalty, there has been throughout history a severe and unmovable position that the new life should be preserved, even at the expense of the mother. In fact, the term “caesarean birth” originated when a mother of one of the Roman Caesars was unable to deliver her baby. They cut her open and took out the baby causing the mother’s death! The heir was more important than the life of the mother.

The forced killing of the mother would always be wrong. However, a mother making a choice to lay down her life for the sake of the child could be an act of supreme love. In the case of abortion, the child has no choice in the matter, but in the case of a mother willingly sacrificing her life, it is indeed a choice that many women would gladly make!

Why should it be unthinkable for a woman to be concerned for the future and the preservation of her offspring? She does not want to end her lineage by killing her unborn descendant. There may indeed be a circumstance in which a woman may, out of selfless motivation, choose to lay down her own life to save and preserve the life of her child.

EXERCISE: What needs might arise in your community if a mother or couple chooses to give birth to a child instead of accepting abortion? Should the church distance itself? Of course not! What are some practical ways the church or individuals can meet these needs?

The biblical understanding of love is summed up in acts of sacrifice (John 10:11-18; 15:12-13; Rom. 5:7-8; 1 John 3:16).

The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep... I lay down My life for the sheep... The reason My Father loves Me is that I lay down My life... I lay it down of My own accord. (John 10:11-18)

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:12-13)

Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:7-8)

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. (1 John 3:16)

It is a celebrated and noble act when people lay down their own lives to save the lives of others, even the lives of those who are strangers to them – dying in warfare to protect fellow citizens, dying while killing a threatening animal, dying while working to clean up a radiation leak, or dying while eliminating a biological threat and so on.

A father will often choose to lay down his life to protect his own wife and family. While godliness does not require a mother to die in childbirth, a woman might desire to lay down her own life to save that of her unborn child. This profoundly difficult decision, of course, must be left for the mother and father to make.

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Chapter Eight: RESPONDING TO THE TRAUMA OF ABORTION

Christian parents share the story of their daughter's silent struggle:

When she was just 15, our daughter Elaine became pregnant. We went along with her decision to marry the young father, and she soon brought our beautiful little grandson into the world.

By the time she was 18, she had another son. Just a year later, before she was twenty, her hopes were dashed and she found herself divorced and alone with two little boys.

Elaine became overwhelmed with distrust and bitterness toward men, so for several years she was in a relationship with a woman. Together they tried to raise the young children. After a few years though, Elaine found she was still attracted to men and became pregnant again. This time the baby was aborted. We were devastated as parents and grandparents.

Later, Elaine met a strong Christian man who married her and took care of the two boys. Elaine and her husband soon became parents of a little girl.

No one talks much about the baby that was aborted, but everyone thinks about the little baby who is gone and wonders what could have been done to prevent that needless death. Meanwhile, everyone always talks about how dear and precious the living children are to them.

How much silent suffering is Elaine experiencing? Does her new husband wonder about her unexplained sadness?

As grandparents, we know about the child that was not born. We cope with the loss. But how do we relate to our precious living grandkids? We hope we can help these children develop a strong sense of value for human life so that they will be very protective of any unborn children in their future.

We are thankful for the many grandchildren that God has given us. Grandchildren are the Lord's reward to us.

May you live to see your children's children. Psalm 128:6

Children's children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children. Proverbs 17:6

Counseling and Help for Those Involved in Abortion

Millions are suffering painful emotional damage and psychological injury after being involved in abortion. Those who live on after the killing of an unborn baby are in dire need of help and support and counseling to deal with the trauma from the willful murder of their own unborn children. This is an epidemic situation all over the world, where millions upon millions of babies are killed every year!

The mothers who chose abortion face various internal conflicts and struggles. For example, they may wallow in guilt, knowing inwardly that they have willfully ended the life of their own innocent baby (Rom. 2:14-15³⁸). Often, they can hardly bear to see a healthy baby sleeping or nursing, cooing or playing, taking first steps or looking into its mother's eyes; they are overwhelmed with grief and burdened

³⁸ ... The requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them. (Rom. 2:15)

with remorse. They need to be delivered from this legitimate conviction for sin, seeking forgiveness to be cleansed from their sin. God will forgive them (1 John 1:9) and purge their conscience to serve Him once again with a pure heart, as they come to Him in faith (Heb. 9:14; 10:19-22).

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! (Hebrews 9:14)

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. (Hebrew 10:19-22)

The need for addressing the internal damage to the hearts of those who have participated in abortion is far-reaching. The need for counseling and help for those who are still living after the killing of the little baby is an additional evidence that abortion is not a good choice. Counseling and psychological help are another matter for another setting. Nevertheless, the believing community must be prepared to extend hope and give help to the many who struggle with the aftermath of abortion (Gal. 6:1-2).

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:1-2)

Helping a Believer Who Has Had an Abortion

How can Christian leaders help those who have been involved in abortion? Many people are affected when an abortion is performed. Spiritual consequences are multiplied in all persons involved. The father of the child will face trauma and guilt. Grandparents may feel like they failed in raising their children. Women who have had an abortion are profoundly damaged psychologically and often suffer physically as well.

EXERCISE: Discuss (discreetly) cases in your experience of those who have faced the dilemma of abortion – both those who have refused abortion and those who had abortions, either forced or voluntary. How were you able to help them? How could you have helped them more effectively?

We should always promote life, but in cases where an abortion has occurred we need to continue to show love and minister the life of God to hurting hearts. Whether they are open about it or not, all who have been through abortion have been deeply wounded. They may appear cold and indifferent, or giddy and carefree – but they are wounded and scarred in their inner being.

Conclusion

Abortion is a big issue. Millions of babies die every year. Or to put it another way, millions of parents kill their children every year. That is the reality of the situation. The biblical principle is that God alone has the power to give life and to take it away. He alone establishes what is right and wrong about killing (Job 1:21; Deut. 32:39; Eccl. 5:18; 8:15; Rom. 14:8). It is never right to kill an innocent baby.

*See now that I Myself am He! There is no god besides Me.
I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal,
And no one can deliver out of My hand. (Deuteronomy 32:39)*

If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. (Romans 14:8)

Yet, it is not enough to recognize that abortion is killing. It is always right to promote life and protect the innocent. Believers are called to help those in need so that lives will be saved.

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. (James 1:27)

The Church has the privilege of showing the compassion of Christ. We reach out with positive actions to those facing a crisis pregnancy as well as to those who have already experienced the trauma of abortion.

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth. (1 John 3:16-18)

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Chapter Nine: MAKING THE CHOICE FOR WHAT IS RIGHT

What is the ultimate standard and basis for choosing what is right about the matter of abortion and about a specific case of abortion? Is there a guiding principle that will point us in the right direction? We must judge. And we must make a righteous judgment (John 7:24).

Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment. (John 7:24)

Any time we try to sort out “what is right” with regard to the issue of an abortion, we will be influenced by several factors. These factors are like filters, and whether we are aware of them or not, these filters are always present to influence our judgment. We must intentionally consider these filters any time we are dealing with all those who are contemplating the killing of an unborn baby.

These four “filters” must be brought together very carefully in helping others work through the weighty choice of whether or not to kill a baby:

1. How we define the issue
2. Our values and their values
3. Guiding principles
4. Our motivations and their motivations

1. Defining the Issue

First, there must be a clear presentation of the reality that abortion means the killing of a baby – the taking of an innocent human life.

Then, we need to gather as much information as is practical, and consider all the crucial elements relevant to the issue at hand. Who is involved? What about grandparents – where do they stand? What are the consequences for killing the child? What are the consequences for giving birth? Is there a conflict with government authority? What sort of help and support would be available should flight or hiding be necessary?

2. Values: What is Precious Here?

We consider all questions about right and wrong based on what is most important and precious to us. We will make wiser decisions as we are aware of and pay attention to these values, making sure that everything is subject to the purpose and will of God. Human life is precious. Where our treasure is, there our hearts will be (Luke 12:34). Our hearts must be devoted to life, seeking to preserve and protect the little baby. Personal freedom or lifestyle choices must not stand above the value of a little human life.

3. Guiding Principles

God Himself and His unchanging Word must be our standard for deciding. Regardless of whether one believes in the Bible or not, it is still a biological reality that an unborn baby is fully human, an innocent life that should not be killed. Abortion is murder.

The guiding principle of love – the greatest commandment – must run through all of our thinking about the innocent unborn (Matt. 22:36-40; 1 John 3:16).

One of them, an expert in the law, tested Him with this question: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as

yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:35-40)

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. (1 John 3:16)

Love God and love others: of these two laws, the first is to love God. This priority of love for God is important in working out the resolution of a conflict between the will of God revealed in Scripture and human authority. In a society where abortion is often mandated by the state, such conflicts will inevitably arise.

In all things, no matter what the final outcome of the dilemma, always bear in mind the weightier matters of justice, mercy and faith (Matt. 23:23), or as proclaimed by the prophet Micah: act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8).

... You have neglected the more important matters of the law – justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. (Matthew 23:23)

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)

4. Motivations: Where We Come From

Let us be motivated by the fact that we come from God. We are all created in the image of God, for His purpose.

The Lord is God. It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves. We are His people. (Ps. 100:3)

He has created us with purpose and destiny. And He has a purpose and destiny for that little unborn baby. He has a plan for the mother. The baby

came from God, and since He gave life, we should leave it to Him to take it away. We must not willfully take a human life.

Is our primary motivation family or our own career goals? On the other hand, are we being demotivated by horrible experiences in our past, a bad upbringing, an abused childhood, ungodly aspects of cultural background? Or is our motivation the relationship we have with our high and holy God?

Our primary motivation must be supreme loyalty to God. Abortion is a very tough issue for those who are in the middle of it, and we must give grace to all involved, and encourage everyone that God is there for us, “an ever-present help in trouble” (Ps. 46:1).

God is wise and unsearchable (Rom. 11:33-36). Who God is, in His great wisdom, is the best motivation for choosing what is right about abortion. And so we come to Him and lay the situation before Him in full confidence that we can be transformed by the renewing of our minds and know His will (Rom. 12:1-2).

*Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable His judgments, and His paths beyond tracing out!
“Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been
His counselor?”
“Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?”
For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.
To Him be the glory forever! Amen.*

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 11:33 – 12:2)

As we bow before God, we can expect answers if we are willing, from start to end, to be loyal to Him and obedient to what He reveals (Eccl.

12:13-14; Luke 6:46; John 7:17; Jam. 1:22). When we are willing to do His will – willing to choose what is right – only then will we know what the truth is and what is right.

*Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter:
Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the
whole duty of man.*

*For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden
thing, whether it is good or evil. (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)*

*Why do you call Me, “Lord, Lord,” and do not do what I
say? (Luke 6:46)*

*If anyone chooses to do God’s will, he will find out whether My
teaching comes from God or whether I speak on My own. (John 7:17)*

*Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves... the
man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and
continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it –
he will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:22-25)*

We come to our God in faith (Heb. 11:6), knowing that He will provide all that we need to effectively wrestle through the toughest dilemmas related to abortion (Rom. 8:32; 1 Cor. 1:29-31; Col. 2:2-3). God will delight in helping us to choose what is good and right.

*And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who
comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those
who earnestly seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6)*

*He who did not spare his own Son, but gave Him up for us all—
how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all
things? (Romans 8:32)*

*[Christ Jesus] has become for us wisdom from God – that is, our
righteousness, holiness and redemption. (1 Corinthians 1:30)*

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*My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.
(Colossians 2:2-3)*

Chapter Ten: Action Plans for Dealing with Abortion

A Chinese believer shares the story of her second child:

When I found myself pregnant with our second child, my older son was already 4 years old. My husband and I were totally unprepared for this surprise. We never planned to have a second child, because it's forbidden in our country.

For three weeks, I was overwhelmed by worries and fear. All kinds of bad imaginations chased after my mind day and night. What if I was taken to the hospital for forced abortion? What if this baby was born, yet could never have an official identity throughout life? How would the grown child handle the pressure of not being able to go to college? Or finding a proper job? And how would my child deal with the social prejudice against 'the illegal child' in our culture? The fears and worries went on and on.

I had no other way out, except for pouring my heart before the Lord every day. It was three weeks bathed in tears.

One day, as I knelt down to pray just as usual, I heard the Lord speak in my heart, *"I have created this child. I will be responsible for the child's life. Do not worry anymore."*

It was not an audible voice, but it was so clear that I could not have misheard it. Actually, at the moment I heard this from God, I felt a heavy load removed away from within me. My tears stopped immediately. The next day, even when I tried to recall the terrible feelings of those three weeks, I couldn't find the least

shadow of those fearsome worries. It was such a thorough deliverance the Lord had given me, “For nothing is impossible with God” (Luke 1:37).

From then on, I was able to focus on preparing myself and my family to welcome this precious baby. At the due time, a beautiful baby girl was born to us. God’s presence gave us great peace and the baby brought us much joy and comfort. So we named her “Peace.”

We still had to face the practical challenge of being unable to register her officially, because we couldn’t pay the huge fine. But because of God’s promise to us, we were not worried. We nurtured our child, loved her, and trusted her future in God’s hand.

When she was 6 years old, God again gave us a surprise – Peace was granted official registration (identity) in a most incredible way – no fine, no inside help of authority figures, nor bribe of any kind. It all happened so easily and naturally. Yet we know it is a supernatural miracle God did for our little girl Peace!

Today, Peace has happily grown into her teenage years and God has so faithfully kept His promises to her and to us. God, who created this life, has taken care of all her needs, and we know He will keep covering her life with His abundant grace!

What Can Believers Do about Abortion?

This book encourages sharing of our painful experiences, our victories, our traumas, our triumphs. It helps us relate the truth of God’s Word to others and helps us apply the truth to our own lives.

We hope this book will serve people who face difficult choices and help them with practical assistance and support.

It is a book for people who want to do what is right. It is for those who want to defend innocent lives and support prospective parents who

might be facing a decision about abortion. It is for those seeking comfort and direction after experiencing an abortion – either a mother, or father, or the grandparents of a child whose life was ended.

Young Singles

The Christian community must determine how best to give of itself to meet the needs of young unmarried women who learn that a new life is growing within their wombs. How can we encourage our young men and young women to guard that sacred trust of their sexual lives, forming new life through the intimacy God has designed for marriage? We must help them to see the goodness of preserving themselves for the beauty and treasure that is godly marriage and a healthy family.

When she turned 15, Tamika and her boyfriend decided that they were ready for sex. Even though they used “protection” she discovered she was pregnant – and they had been together just one time!

Her boyfriend was scared and began drinking excessively. Then he started beating Tamika, hoping it would cause a miscarriage. He took her to a clinic to arrange for an abortion. Not wanting to go through with an abortion, Tamika “lost” the papers she needed. This made her boyfriend even more violent.

Toward the end of her pregnancy, Tamika’s parents found out and helped her get medical attention. Tamika considered giving the baby up for adoption, but couldn’t go through with it once she saw her baby. The troubled father finally obtained a job to help support his child. Before long though, he went back to drinking and left Tamika alone with her caring parents and the little baby.

Tamika later married a man who became a wonderful father to the child. Tamika is not sorry about her decision to keep her baby. She gave up her college plans, but she is happy to devote herself to her son.

Young people must learn that sexuality is not just about their private rights or privileges. It is through sexuality that new life is brought into the world – a little human baby! Both parents need to be responsible regarding the potential to create new life.

The Role of Fathers

Abortion is often presented as if it is none of the father's business. But in fact the child is as much his as the mother's! Denying the contribution of the father is biological ignorance! Any school child knows that both the male and the female contribute equally to the life that is conceived – whether a flower, a puppy, or a human baby.

The young men who are involved in promiscuous behavior need to learn how important it is for them to step up and take their share of ownership of the new life they helped create. Men need to see that they are responsible parties in any creation of new life – whether a first child or a subsequent child. Men can't just push it off on the woman as "her problem." A distracted and apathetic father, busily pursuing entertainment or career must see that the baby is as much his responsibility as it is hers.

The other side is that as much as a woman has a right over her own body, the father should assert his right as father on behalf of the unborn child. He should not allow the woman to say it is a private matter for her. She can't say, "It's none of his business." The baby is as much his as it is hers.

Married or not, a father should take care of his child. Paying for an abortion is the exact opposite of taking care of the child. A father should not advocate or promote abortion. He should do his utmost to protect the life of the unborn child, even if the mother doesn't want the baby. Men are protectors, not destroyers.

The Bible shows that a father is responsible to provide the material needs of his own family, especially a new baby (1 Tim. 5:8). Even if you don't marry, when you make a baby, you make a family. Many needs arise when a new baby comes on the scene: prenatal care, expenses for the

birth, diapers, baby food, clothing, child care, in addition to the needs of the mother. Then, too, the father should be there to help in the care and upbringing of the child (Eph. 6:4).

Unmarried young men should keep these duties and responsibilities in mind. Sex was designed by God for marriage. It is the means by which new life is brought into the world. The plan of God is that children be brought into the world in the context of a healthy family. Marriage and family is the ideal situation.

However, a young man or woman involved in a pregnancy out of wedlock should not feel obligated to enter into marriage. There is no biblical requirement that a couple must marry if they produce a child. Marriage may be a good course if there is love and compatibility between them. But in any case, the father remains responsible for the care and upbringing of any child he produces. This responsibility for upbringing should motivate young men to refrain from sex outside of marriage. Abortion is never an option to evade these duties.

Children need fathers in their lives. Little boys and little girls need a father for healthy development into adulthood. Fathers have a vital role in teaching their children about God (Gen. 18:17-19; Deut. 6:6-7; Eph. 6:4).

So, how is the father affected if his baby was aborted? What if the father supported and encouraged the abortion? What if the abortion was performed against his wishes? No matter what, the father knows that his baby has been killed. A father may seem to be cold and indifferent over the loss. He may be in deep grief. In any case, the father needs counseling, help and healing. Someone needs to be with him and pray, helping him come to terms with the fact that a life has been taken.

Young fathers should also know that others in the Christian community will be there to help. Christians should step in to give comfort after an abortion. They should come together to help any couple bringing a baby into the world, especially a young man who determines to support his child.

We certainly should not reject or shun a young man involved in a pregnancy outside of marriage. This is a point in his life when he needs encouragement and mentoring in the duties of fatherhood. He needs help, not criticism.

The Role of Grandparents

Then, in addition to our concern about young mothers and fathers, there are also grandparents who care about the lives and futures of their own children and grandchildren. The elders – grandparents – need to step up and provide input. It is their grandbaby!

Grandparents should be supportive of the prospective parents and the new life that is soon to enter the world. They need to extend moral support, time, resources, caregiving, and whatever else they have. What are we as grandparents saving it all for? Let us invest our energy and possessions to bless our future generations.

Many grandparents have lost grandbabies through abortion. We must not ignore their grief and need for counseling and help.

Married Couples

As certainly as young singles need encouragement and help in order to build a healthy future family, those families already established must be cared for as well. Married couples need the support of other believers.

Many are in great conflict and face great struggles about the possibility of a second child. How can they deal with an unexpected second pregnancy? Christians must work out how to be good citizens of the nation in which they find themselves, while at the same time maintaining absolute loyalty to the kingdom of Heaven and the Lord of Life.

The Church Family

The church family must support life. What can the church do for the unborn child? What can be done for the parents – the mother and the father? What can they do for the community – for unbelievers around them to support life?

Church leaders need to pray, discuss and determine what their role is in serving unborn babies: crisis pregnancy assistance, adoption, day care, help with babies, etc. What ideas can you implement? What can you do to provide practical help?

Christians must strive to nurture and maintain excellent models of healthy families in a society that may be leaning more toward individualism, or a society that stresses the collective. In the middle, between these opposite poles, stands the community of faith with a wholesome balance of strong families.

Amy was pregnant and scared. She felt she had no option but abortion. She could not see herself raising a child alone, so she made an appointment to have an abortion.

She learned of a Christian group that provided real help for single mothers. Amy canceled her plan to have an abortion after she learned that help and support were available. Church members helped her with diapers and food. She kept her baby because she was no longer alone.

How Do Christians Relate to Their Government?

Serious issues arise in the relationship of believers to any secular society. How do Christians relate to a government that is not concerned with honoring the God of creation, to a state which may be controlled by those who do not acknowledge the existence of God? This is nothing new to the Christian faith. The early Church faced a similar situation.

The New Testament was written in a time when Rome ruled the world, yet Christians were taught to honor and respect the government. All the declarations of the apostles for believers to be good citizens and submissive to the rulers were in the context of governments which had little regard for the truth of God (Rom. 13:1-7; Tit. 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:11-17).

Peter said “honor the king” (1 Pet. 2:17). Very likely he was speaking of Nero, the wicked emperor who entertained himself by killing Christians. It is always a challenge to properly hold in balance honoring God and respecting human governments, but that is the call of God upon believers.

Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king. (1 Peter 2:17)

Notice that the emphasis of this book is not about influencing or changing government policies. Rather, it is about living as the people of God while in the midst of a world that does not bow to God. It is about what Christians can do in their personal lives to help those facing abortion.

Christians should focus on touching individual lives with the compassion of Jesus Christ. Christians are called to live righteously and godly regardless of the condition of the society around them (Tit. 2:12). They are to shine as lights in darkness.

Governments Are Set in Place by God

The good of the collective society is very important. We see from the New Testament that God has set governments in place for our good, so that we may live peaceful and quiet lives (1 Tim. 2:1-2). Governments are provided by God to encourage good living and positive contribution to society (Rom. 13:3). Law-abiding citizens should expect the protection of the government from wrongdoers.

Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels

against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. (Romans 13:1-4)

Government also provides order in society: protection from fraud, legislation to encourage care of the elderly, protection of the innocent. Other practical provisions of government include roads, electricity, safe water, disease control and crime prevention.

In the New Testament, Christians enjoyed the good things that came from government. Paul appealed to the government for protection from an angry mob (Acts 23:12-22). He also appealed to his Roman citizenship to avoid mistreatment (Acts 16:37-39; 22:23-27).

Abortion is a reality in society. What are we to do in the face of this reality? The Christian's primary allegiance is to God. We must give respect and obedience to our human government, but if the government requires disobedience to God, then we must obey God (Luke 20:25; Acts 5:29; Phil. 3:20).

It is strongly urged that believers get together with others who are Christians, and discuss positive solutions. It may even be possible and beneficial to involve unbelievers in the discussion. Pray to God, share your ideas and pool your resources to provide meaningful help to those facing difficult dilemmas involving the prospect of abortion.

The Value of Your Story

One of the best ways to help others is to tell your own story. It will be helpful to others facing the same dilemma, but it will also help you if you have been through it, either as a father or as a mother. Your past

may involve choosing against abortion or it may involve suffering an abortion. Your story will help heal the wounded hearts of those who have been traumatized by abortion.

Many testimonies appeared throughout this book. These are examples of how your own story might be used to help others in their struggles to choose what is right about the lives of the innocents.

Informed Dialogue, Prayer, and Action

This book has provided scientific facts about the biological realities of conception and the lives of the innocent unborn. In addition, biblical truth has been taught about the nature of God as the Author of life and His divine direction over the giving of life. Both of these sources of knowledge about the beginning of life and the lives of the unborn make it clear that the matter of abortion is an issue of life or death.

This information should provoke discussion among Christian leaders, causing them to work together to promote appropriate and practical actions relative to the matter of abortion. We need to talk together about what we can do to prevent abortions. However, abortions are going to happen. So we also need to discuss what can be done within the Christian community to help those who have been traumatized by the loss of a child through abortion.

The unborn who are threatened need someone to cry out to God to preserve their lives. Believers need to labor and pray to protect the lives of the innocents who are being slaughtered by the hundreds every hour of every day. May this book help direct our prayers, our sharing with others, and our care for the precious *Lives of the Innocents*.

Appendices

Appendix A

Selected Scriptures on Sexual Immorality and Moral Purity

Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature. (Romans 13:14)

“Food for the stomach and the stomach for food” – but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. By His power God raised the Lord from the dead, and He will raise us also.

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ Himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.” But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with Him in spirit.

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. (1 Corinthians 6:13-20)

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in

conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery... I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Galatians 5:16-23)

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. (Ephesians 5:3)

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. (Colossians 3:5-6)

It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body [or learn to live with his own wife] in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.

(1 Thessalonians 4:3-7)

Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. (2 Timothy 2:22)

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age... (Titus 2:11-12)

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Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us. (1 Peter 2:11-12)

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Appendix B

Selected Scriptures on Legitimate Sexual Expression within Marriage

The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."... But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, He took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib He had taken out of the man, and He brought her to the man.

The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame. (Genesis 2:18, 24-25)

Abimelech king of the Philistines looked down from a window and saw Isaac caressing his wife Rebekah. (Genesis 26:8)

Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares?

Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers.

May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer –

May her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love.

Why be captivated, my son, by an adulteress?

Why embrace the bosom of another man's wife? (Proverbs 5:15-20)

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work:

If one falls down, his friend can help him up.

But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!

Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.

But how can one keep warm alone?

Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves.

A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

“Haven’t you read,” [Jesus] replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” (Matthew 19:4-6)

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, His body, of which He is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church – for we are members of His body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. (Ephesians 5:22-33)

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. (1 Corinthians 6:18-20)

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Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry [or not to touch a woman sexually], But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. (1 Corinthians 7:1-6)

God ... richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. (1Timothy 6:17)

Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. (Hebrews 13:4)

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Appendix C

Companion Study Guide

INTRODUCTION

Overview:

This Companion Study Guide provides learning experiences in the form of discussion topics, exercises, and prayer suggestions. These materials can be used by leaders to help them guide their people in making right choices about abortion. These learning experiences are also intended to promote informed dialogue so that believers can work together to offer real help to those facing the challenge of abortion.

Core Questions:

Christians should establish answers in their own hearts to the important issues pertaining to the precious lives of the innocents. The learning experiences in this appendix are designed to address several key questions:

- Why do we value life? How does our worldview about the origin of life give us meaning and purpose that is lacking in those who are naturalistic?
- When does each human life begin? How do we support our position about the beginning of human life from science and from Scripture?
- What are some practical actions and compassionate responses to abortion?

Scripture Memorization:

The concept of the value of the lives of the innocents comes straight from the Bible. God's Word must be the foundation of all our beliefs, values, and actions. From your reading of the book *Lives of the Innocents*, what are key scriptures that grab your heart? What passages effectively communicate the value of human life?

It would be helpful to memorize several significant verses. Here are a few suggestions.

- *Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked. (Psalm 82:3-4)*
- *For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well. (Psalm 139:13-14)*
- *Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. (Titus 3:1-2)*

Suggested Uses:

The discussion topics, exercises, and prayer guidelines may be used within a local church as further development of the ideas in the book. They could also serve as material for a seminar of one to two days. Some of the learning experiences could be explored by leaders to implement plans for cooperative ministry among churches to serve those facing the challenge of abortion.

Any of these exercises can be carried out individually, or in pairs, or in a small group setting. Some are for all who are believers – those on the front lines of day to day life. Some might be better suited to leadership or decision-makers in a group or movement, but any question can be thought through by individuals. Ultimately, it would be good to share ideas and work together to implement positive actions that will promote life.

FOUR DYNAMICS OF TRANSFORMATION

The crisis of abortion can never be adequately addressed on an intellectual level alone – changing minds. Nor is it addressed merely at a political level – changing policy. The fruitful and most effective approach is to reach the individual – changing the heart. We pray and labor to see God transform people from the inside out.

The transformation of the believer is never accomplished just by raising one's hand and saying a prayer, or being baptized, or hanging around with other good people, and certainly not just by reading a book! In order to be transformed we need a living relationship with the living Lord, Jesus Christ. We need His hand to touch every aspect of our lives!

The following learning experiences involve a robust integration of four key dynamics necessary for transformation.

1 The Spiritual Dynamic

This includes all of our “vertical” relationship with God: our worship and praise, as well as inner commitment to Him in spiritual disciplines such as solitude, devotions, meditation, reflection, and retreats. Bible reading with a focus on memorization, meditation, praying the Scriptures and journaling are also elements of the spiritual dynamic. In all of these things we need to seek a profound moving of the Holy Spirit as we wait upon God.

2 The Relational Dynamic

Our Christian walk is not a solo effort. God has provided the wonderful resource of the community of believers in the local church and in the Church around the world. We also have family and friends to help us

toward a transformed life and character. We need each other. We need all kinds of “horizontal” relationships: mentors and peers, accountability and counsel, working and playing together. We need to hear the testimonies of others and learn from their experiences, while we share of ourselves in return. We thrive through connection with others.

3 The Experiential Dynamic

Transformation will not come about merely by hearing about the experiences of others. We all need our own experiences to produce growth and transformation. Find ways to help others and you will be helped yourself! Leaders should do what they can to encourage every believer to enter into the experience of the life of faith and obedience. Whether we plan it or not, God Himself places us in challenging situations to bring needed transformation.

4 The Instructional Dynamic

Valuable instruction is often limited to studying and listening to lectures. But effective instruction also incorporates visual aids, illustrations, physical activities, discussion, question and answer sessions, problem-solving, symposiums, debate, and brainstorming. Follow-up evaluation of students and teachers is vital to improvement of instructional methods.

How can we address the issue of abortion effectively? Only as we integrate these four dynamics of transformation will anything result that is effective and productive for the kingdom of God. The matter of abortion must never be all about winning a debate. As you consider the learning experiences that follow, please develop real answers and practical responses that involve these dynamics of transformation – spiritual, relational, experiential, and instructional.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Discussion Topic: Overwhelmed by Guilt

After reading the testimony of Chapter 1, how would you help this woman? What Scriptures would you use? How would you pray in preparation? How would you pray with the person? What follow-up would be appropriate? How much should you become involved in the person's life as an encourager or mentor? Could you steer the person to someone else with a similar background? If you were a person who had experienced an abortion, how would you want someone to help you? Cover this topic thoroughly and try to develop an outline of what might be the best way to help someone. Incorporate the four dynamics.

Discussion Topic: Before and After

This discussion topic would be suitable for a weekend workshop or leader symposium. After reading the entire book, leaders may discuss how to effectively deal with abortion from these two perspectives.

On the one hand, we need to think about how we can prevent abortions. But we also need to address issues that arise for those who have been through an abortion. Create two discussion groups to brainstorm on these two areas of concern. Let them prepare for several hours (or the first day) and then team-share with the whole group and develop an action plan together. Pay special attention to the experiential dynamic – how believers can enter into ministry.

- Preventive Actions and Attitudes:
 - Chastity and sexual purity
 - Modeling a healthy family
 - Recognizing the beginning of human life
 - Every human life is precious
 - How to provide information on life

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- Discretion in relation to the state
- Protecting an unborn child
- Providing for a second child

- Responsive Actions and Attitudes:
 - Compassion and grace; honesty and truth
 - Trauma in survivors – parents and grandparents
 - ~ Hidden or buried pain and injury of the heart
 - ~ Callous and hard hearts
 - ~ Open and obvious brokenness
 - Mentoring and peer relationships
 - Family involvement
 - Counseling and follow-up
 - Actual survivors of failed abortion attempts
 - Non-aborted siblings – survivor guilt
 - Post-abortion believers helping those now facing abortion

After the group discussion, share your conclusions (use several speakers) with the whole group. Pray together to discover means and ways to implement those elements of these plans that seem to have real potential for good. How can these positive solutions be carried out in local churches in a discreet manner that avoids confrontation with authorities?

EXERCISE: Design a workshop for your church or movement that focuses on preparing believers for ministry to those who are considering abortion or those who have had abortions. What are the practical needs and what areas need to be addressed in counseling? The design should be focused on compassionate action rather than abortion statistics and winning a debate.

Discussion Topic: Dealing with Inner Turmoil

What is the biblical answer to the inner turmoil and silent suffering that accompanies abortion?

- In teams, make a list of the effects of shame on a believer.
- What are proper responses of the church to the listed effects of shame?
- Describe the atmosphere required in the church for believers to address the guilt of killing or advocating the killing of an unborn child?

A person struggling with shame over an abortion will rarely ask for help.

- What are some “signals” that a person is struggling with shame?
- How can healthy believers initiate connection to offer encouragement?
- What will it take for the church to provide long-term help (see list of proper responses) and follow up?

Discussion Topic: Avoiding Pregnancy

In order to prevent a “forced abortion” we can always think of avoiding pregnancy in the first place – purity in singlehood, birth control within marriage.

- Any birth control must be of a nature that is “non-abortive.” Is it a godly thing to seek to have additional children in defiance of the law? Should we just “be fruitful and multiply” and then face the consequences? Or should Christians avoid conception of another child by practicing birth control, or even abstinence?
- Certainly all believers who are unmarried should be pure and chaste. Yes, it is an ideal, but purity should be the norm, while sexual sin should not even be mentioned among us (Eph. 4:17-19; 5:3-13). How can we promote this expression of purity as the normal Christian life?

Discussion Topic: What if a Second Child is Born?

Discuss proper responses of believers to help those who have chosen to be the parents of a second child rather than submitting to an abortion. Should believers who dissent be abandoned and ignored by the church? How can we help families with multiple children?

If a second child has been born, obviously a decision has been made to bring the child to birth. Parents may be subject to penalties and restrictions, but we want the child to thrive and grow to be a good contribution to the society. People faced such dilemmas in Bible times and we can learn lessons from how the people of God in history have addressed such difficulties (Ex. 1:15-20; Acts 4:19; 5:29).

In biblical times, believers were able to go to the authorities for the protection of life (Acts 16:37-39; 22:23-27; 23:12-27). But in many cultures is that really a legitimate option? How can believers help new parents relate to lawful authority? Is this a matter in which we should just bear the consequences? Or should we flee and hide? “Laying low” and staying under the radar may be a wise course of action. We must determine how to wisely provide for that second baby amidst the pressure of a culture that values single-child families.

Discussion Topic: The Meaning of Life

A yearning for connection with the invisible, and with the Creator, is common in widely separated societies. Our imaginations about the “other world” cannot be denied or ignored. Every atheist often thinks about what might be if there were a God. We know that the way we think about these things makes us unique in the created world. Believers have meaning and purpose. How does understanding of the meaning of life help us make right decisions about abortion?

EXERCISE: Research ancient traditions of your own culture. What were some of the early beliefs about the “other world” and life after death? Consider buildings and architecture that point to ideas about immortality.

EXERCISE: Conduct man-on-the-street interviews, “polls,” or “surveys,” as a means to get people thinking and talking. Please mind how you conduct these interviews so as not to call undue attention to yourselves. Our purpose is to collect people’s thoughts on abortion. Be sure to protect the anonymity of the participants. This may open doors for ministry to people needing help. What questions might you ask? Discuss your findings with the intent of finding practical solutions.

EXERCISE: Watch an appropriate video presentation of the fertilization of an egg and the development of an embryo. Try to find a resource that shows the development of an unborn child (series of ultrasound images). Let yourself be amazed and in awe at the wonder of God’s wisdom and provision in forming us in our mothers’ wombs. Read Psalm 139 aloud and worship God.

EXERCISE: What are the attitudes toward abortion in your culture and in the history of your society? What can you learn by cautious investigation of ancient law codes? Write down your findings.

EXERCISE: Renewing the mind. Find key Scripture verses on Life, and how God alone is the sovereign Lord of Life. We are transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:1-2). Write these verses on cards, make banners, create posters or other visual devices in order to put these truths of God before your eyes (Deut. 6:7-9). Can you think of original mottos (brief pithy phrases) that would be suitable for calligraphy art to promote the understanding that life is precious?

Discussion Topic: Political Entanglement

Dissension or political involvement – Why should a Christian avoid political agitation? Should a Christian work to bring about a change of policies in a society that is not submitted to the truth of God?

What actions on a personal level might be appropriate? What might a believer who works in government do? What might a village farmer or a student or an elderly retired person do? How do we honor the ruling powers of the “kingdoms of this world” (Rev. 11:15) while we are submitted to God with our citizenship in heaven (Phil. 3:20-21)?

Please note that our purpose is not to encourage the readers to promote policy changes. We emphasize individual conviction and compassion, showing love at the personal level within the expression of church-life.

Discussion Topic: An Unapproved Birth

Within the Christian community, we need to come alongside and give help to those who have chosen against abortion. It is not enough to oppose abortion. We must also step up and help the parents and their child before and after the birth. Those who choose life should have confidence that the believing community will support them in their decision.

Let these discussion questions that follow be divided among small groups. Then share observations and conclusions with the whole group.

- How can we help someone who wants to give birth when it is unapproved? Wouldn't the needs be much the same for the first child? Diapers, help with meals, child care, training in parenting. What would be the unique needs for a second child? Protection during the pregnancy, hiding, fleeing persecution, obtaining papers, etc.
- How do the needs differ with respect to a couple in contrast to the needs of a single mom? After considering the needs – material and emotional, discuss the things that could be done

to help meet those needs. What can individuals do and what can believers do in a joint effort?

- What needs might arise in your community of believers if a mother or couple chooses to give birth to a child instead of submitting to an abortion? Should the church distance itself? Of course not! How can a local church protect its existence while protecting the unborn? What are the key issues of discretion and security?

Discussion Topic: The Many Faces of Abortion

Women who have had an abortion are profoundly damaged psychologically and often suffer physically as well. Much of the ministry attention is focused on the mother. Yet, many others are affected when an abortion is performed. How can Christian leaders help all who have been involved in abortion?

Spiritual consequences are multiplied in all persons involved. The father of the child will face trauma and guilt. Grandparents may feel like they failed in raising their children. Other children in the family may wonder about siblings that were killed through abortion.

What are some signals that may indicate silent suffering? How can we minister to all these people that are affected by abortion?

Talk together discreetly about people you know who have faced the dilemma of abortion in their family – both those who have refused abortion and those who had abortions, either forced or voluntary. How were you able to help them? How could you have helped them more effectively?

Discussion Topic: Children and Abortion

How can we teach young children about the value of life? In the earliest years of their education, children are steeped in the teachings of evolution, which forms a low view of human life. How can we counter

this dehumanization? Discuss parental involvement, instruction from the church, modeling a high regard for life, stages of childhood development in developing a strategy to train children.

Discussion Topic: Hidden Pain

What about a person who has been involved in an abortion yet appears to have no sense of loss or trauma; no remorse or sense of guilt over it? Is everyone expected to have a sense that something “bad” has taken place? Doesn’t everyone know that in reality a baby’s life has been destroyed? How much is lack of awareness and how much is denial? We can’t push people into feeling bad about an abortion, but we should be patient and ready to help when the reality hits them. An abortion victim cannot manufacture sorrow, so no one should be expected to pretend that they feel bad. Discuss.

Discussion Topic: A Person, Not an “It”

Try referring to your friends and leaders or a famous person as “it” rather than he or she. How does this affect the way you view them? We need to make a habit of not referring to an unborn child as an “it.” Why?

Discussion Topic: Naturalistic Worldview

A naturalistic worldview assumes that there is no spiritual reality and no Creator, so that all life evolved by chance from non-life. How does a society built around such thinking assign any value to human life over animal life? Why is life important to such a society? How much does that worldview affect believers who want to follow God? The Bible shows that we did not evolve from single-celled life. God created Adam when He formed him out of the dust of the ground, so we are all the creation of God. Discuss how the fact of creation gives human life value, dignity and meaning.

Discussion Topic: Environmentalism

Why is there so much zeal for various environmental causes such as the “green movement?” Although we should be good stewards of the creation, why do some people seem to care more about the killing of animals than the loss of millions of human lives as a result of abortion? How does an evolutionary worldview contribute to the devaluing of human life? How should we pray about this distorted sense of values? How can we come to a greater understanding of God-given purpose in our creation?

Discussion Topic: Disability

Is the value of an unborn child who may have a “birth defect” the same as a healthy unborn child? What about a child of an undesired gender? What contributions to society have been made by persons who were born with blindness, deafness or other disabilities? How could a child with a disability be a blessing to a family? How can a disabled person (perhaps in a vegetative state) who is unable to make any contribution still be seen as valuable and precious?

Discussion Topic: Life after Death

What happens after death to an unborn baby? What happens to a one-year-old baby who dies? What Scriptures could you share with someone who is agonizing over these questions?

Discussion Topic: Long-term Purpose

Many view abortion as an easy solution or “quick fix” to a difficult problem. Why is this attitude contrary to God’s plan for growth and transformation of the believer? Discuss the long-term effects of abortion on the individual. Discuss the long-term effects of giving birth and raising a child.

Discussion Topic: Manipulation of Language

What evasive terms for justifying abortion are used in your culture? Examples: women's health issues, population control, etc. Think of examples from media, entertainment, music, literature, etc. How is the language of the abortion issue obscuring the stark reality of what is happening to millions of lives?

Discussion Topic: Avoiding Debate to Focus on Action

How can we avoid being dragged into an abortion debate? Some believers feel they are contributing to the cause of life through their contentious intellectual opposition to abortion. They want to talk about how evil abortion is, but do little to help those in need. We must never allow the preciousness of human life to be reduced to winning a debate. How can we steer the "debaters" in the direction of showing compassion?

Discussion Topic: Motivations and Justifications

Do the motivations for abortion differ in various societies? Some cultures emphasize a woman's "right to privacy," while other cultures may focus on the "good of the collective." How does this understanding help us in ministering to those affected by abortion?

Discussion Topic: Personal Privacy

Abortion is a very personal and private matter, as well it should be. It may be very difficult for some to talk about. What kind of discretion is needed? Should counselors be of the same gender as those needing help? Though it is personal and private, it needs to be addressed in order for those involved to receive help. How do we gently offer a listening ear and a helping hand?

CREATING RESOURCES

Local believers are encouraged to create their own resources to help people in need apart from reliance on ministries and organizations external to the culture. How can we proclaim the value of life to our own culture?

Resource Suggestion: Publish

How can we protect the precious lives of the innocents? For example, a published quarterly periodical or a five-page tract containing a testimony might be an effective tool to promote life. Other possibilities might include posters, poignant pictures, cards, one-line slogans to let people know that life is precious and there is help available. Brainstorm and develop ideas.

How could such materials be distributed or posted in an appropriate manner that is entirely legal and avoids confrontation with authorities? We certainly want to focus on valuing life, and we don't want to upset the authority, and give them any legitimate reason to believe that Christians do things against them in devious and secret ways.

People write obscene graffiti on the walls of public places. Perhaps as a voluntary public service, believers could clean up such eyesores, and replace the evil with words or images that celebrate the goodness of life. In many cities, we can see advertisements for "painless abortion" in the media, in the streets, on buildings, on telephone poles, and even on buses and taxis. They offer such "handy help" to many who are struggling with the "dilemma." How can Christians address this? What are your ideas?

Resource Suggestion: Tell the Abortion Story

Tell your story! One of the best ways to help others is to tell your own story. It will be helpful to others facing the same dilemma, but it will also help you if you have been through it, either as a father or mother, or

as grandparents. Your past may involve choosing against abortion or it may involve suffering an abortion. Your story will help heal the wounded hearts of those who have been traumatized by abortion.

What was it like to look at other mothers cuddling healthy babies? How did you find forgiveness? What did you sense about the love of God during all that you went through? The truth is most effectively conveyed when people share from their own experience.

Sharing our testimonies also sets us free. Men and women who have ended the lives of their babies (willingly or unwillingly) must face that reality as they tell their story. When they look in the mirror and say to themselves, “What have you done!” then, they are on the path to healing. When they understand that a real human life has ended, that is when they are most in need of caring comfort.

People who have been through abortion need a shoulder to lean on and someone with a compassionate ear to listen. They need a supportive family, caring friends, and a prayerful community of faith around them. Most importantly, they need to connect with the God of all comfort (2 Cor. 1:3-4).

They need to know that God is with them. God is lovingly concerned for all of His own children, and is an ever-present help, able to completely save and heal anyone who comes to Him for help (Psalm 46:1; Heb. 7:25).

Many testimonies appeared throughout this book. These are examples of how your own story might be used to help others in their struggles to choose what is right about the lives of the innocents. Share your own stories. Share them in personal conversations, before others, and in writing. Written stories should have details changed to protect privacy and to avoid confrontation with authorities.

EXERCISE: Gather testimonies – your own, and those of people you know. How do these testimonies illustrate the various points in the book *Lives of the Innocents*? Personal stories will drive home the truth. Discuss how to disseminate those testimonies, changing details to protect privacy.

Resource Suggestion: Distribution

How can we effectively disseminate information that will bring about changes in individual lives? Our goal should be to reach the hearts in a personal way rather than attempting to bring about political changes in public policy. A society is made up of individuals. How can we inform and persuade individuals to value all human life as a gift from God? Discuss practical ways to distribute information.

Resource Suggestion: Prayerful Creativity

No one from the outside can dictate how people in the midst of a cultural challenge should properly respond. The important decisions to act can be made only by those who are in the middle of the conflict. Through much prayer and seeking the face of God, the Giver of life, those who are on the front lines will be shown the path to take.

Prayer Point: After discussing this topic, spend time in prayer in small groups of three or four. Ask God for wisdom and boldness and direction, as believers in your culture take on the burden to protect precious unborn babies.

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PRAYER POINT SUGGESTIONS

Prayer Point: The Preciousness of One

Go to a park or someplace where you can see young children. Discreetly take notice of one child. Consider before God the possible future for that child and the unique way that child could reveal Jesus. Pray for that child to be given the gospel and to come to Jesus.

Prayer Point: Prayer Walking

Could a few individuals covertly engage in spiritual warfare by walking around a facility that performs abortions, praying silently as they stroll along? *Warning:* Do not use prayer as a public statement or as a form of protest to be seen of men. Instead, pray calmly and confidently in the quietness of your heart, speaking to yourself and to God; let God who hears in secret reward you (1 Cor. 14:28; Matt. 6:6).

Prayer Point: Pray the Scripture

Read Micah 6:8 aloud and apply it in prayer to the abortion issue in your culture. Use this for individual prayer or small group prayer. What other scripture passages would be seeds for prayer?

Prayer Point: Prepare for Prayer Ministry!

What are heaven's resources for one who had an abortion that will bring redemption and close the doors to destruction? What are heaven's resources for one who wants to make the choice to give birth in difficult circumstances? What are the promises of God that deal with abortion – the fatherless, the orphans, the widows, and the needy? Pray over these truths and ask God to pour out His provision for those in need.

Prayer Point: Prayer List

Create a “prayer list” of important issues relative to abortion. Who needs prayer? What needs to be opposed in spiritual warfare? Where do we need to cry out for God’s mercy? Who needs divine provision? What are the needs?

Prayer Point: Pray with Someone

Find people facing the abortion issue and pray with them (see above exercises). This could be a woman who has had an abortion, a couple, or grandparents, a young father who did or did not want the abortion, etc.

Prayer Point: Worship!

Consider and discuss how the Son of God entered this world after spending nine months as an unborn child in the womb of His mother. How should this affect our compassion for the unborn? Praise and thank God that He gave dignity to this stage of life. Worship Jesus for this amazing reality!

