Is There a Biblical Basis for Being Pro-Choice?
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Over at BeliefNet, an unnamed author attempts to make a biblical case for the pro-choice view on abortion. The author calls the issue “morally complex” and points to the diversity of religious views on abortion as reasons the question is not settled.

He (or she) could have pointed out that the religious bodies which take a pro-choice position are less likely than those who take the pro-life view to read the Bible as God's inerrant, inspired, authoritative, and sufficient word. One could also say they are less likely to employ a grammatical-historical hermeneutic of interpretation than those who can systematically trace the sanctity of human life throughout the Bible.

He then makes the usual argument that no one in a pluralistic society should impose religious views on everyone else through the passage of laws. What he means is they shouldn't pass laws restricting abortion, because the pro-choice side most certainly advocates for laws that grant the maximum in leniency on abortion, despite the offense such laws cause a good many people on the other side.

He trotts out “the Bible never mentions abortion” canard without acknowledging any of the many passages the pro-life people use in support of their view. Pointing to the Exodus 21 passage about premature birth that results from the violence of fighting men, the author fails to give any attention to pro-life answers that have been made.

He sows confusion over the beginning of life, equating it with the start of pregnancy. These are not really two different things, but we get it. Life can begin in a petri dish, but pregnancy for (IVF users) begins at implantation. One wishes he could at least be as honest as other abortion advocates and some abortionists.

The author never deals with what exactly is being aborted. Whenever someone says, as he does, that “all life is sacred” that person is usually less concerned about the sanctity of human life and more about quality of life and other utilitarian concerns.

Just in case he’s wrong about abortion, he rather glibly offers blanket forgiveness: “If we make wrong choices, God forgives us.” He does not address the phenomenon of deep regret and grief that many women experience after an abortion, which even occurs in cultures where “abortion is murder” is a foreign notion.
The author does briefly set out six biblical principles that are worthy of discussion. My equally brief comments on each will be in italic.

1. **Stewardship.** "...[A]s moral agents, women have the God-given obligation to make decisions about the course of action that seems most responsible in cases of unwelcome pregnancy."
   
   The problem with this explanation of stewardship is that, in the passage referenced (Genesis 1:27-28), God limited human stewardship to the realms of fish, birds, and animals. He never gave us carte blanche dominion or rule over other people.

2. **Free will.** About this he says, "Created in God's image, we are endowed with the ability to make moral choices. This ability is the very basis of an individual's dignity and autonomy."
   
   This is true, within limits. Much of the Bible, however, is devoted to telling us that some choices are not in keeping with the nature and character of God. Some choices are abominable to Him – in particular the shedding of innocent blood and most notably child-sacrifice (Proverbs 6:16-19, Jeremiah 32:35). Furthermore, we’re taught that choices have consequences – some are rewarded while others earn God’s wrath. Not all choices, therefore, are equal.

3. **Personhood.** "The Bible's portrait of personhood centers on the woman and man who bear the image of God and live in responsible relation to God."
   
   Not so fast. The Bible also recognizes the personalities of people yet unborn. I offer just one of many examples: In Genesis 25:21-26, the conception, gestation, and birth of Jacob and Esau are described. During Rebekah's pregnancy, God describes the nature of each twin. He knew them and had specific plans for them. According to Hosea 12:2-4, Jacob seems to have had the same personality inside the womb as he had as an adult. It appears he may have even been judged by God for something he had done while in the womb. This example contradicts a statement made earlier in the article which asserts the Bible "says nothing about the process of conception, pregnancy, and birth."

4. **The sanctity of life.** "...It is because we believe in the sanctity of all human life that we are sensitive to the effects of an unwanted pregnancy on women and families.... [W]e believe a child has the right to enter the world wanted and loved... are sensitive to the effects of an unwanted pregnancy upon individual women, upon their loved ones and their families, and we recognize that they, not we, must determine what is best for those directly concerned and involved."

   Here he does refer to the sanctity of human life, which is commendable. So is sympathy for people in difficult circumstances. What’s missing is sympathy for the unborn and their even more basic right to life. Each child conceived is a creation of God, and is loved and wanted by Him. We must encourage people to make choices that will not harm other human beings and alienate them from God.

5. **Respect.** "The Bible places full responsibility for procreation in the hands of parents. Requiring a woman to complete a pregnancy against her will devalues motherhood and shows lack of respect for women."

   As shown in the earlier example, procreation involves God, so therefore the responsibility for life is not solely in human hands. If, as the Bible teaches, He sovereignly grants life (1 Samuel 2:6 and many other passages), then it would be abortion that devalues motherhood, not laws against it. It is never dignified or ennobling to kill an innocent person. Failing to help pregnant women carry their children to term is, on the other hand, something that shows them a lack of respect.
6. **Religious Liberty.** "Religious Americans honor the dignity and value of all human life but recognize that different religious traditions hold a variety of views regarding when life begins and when ensoulment occurs. In this nation all are free to live according to their consciences and religious beliefs. No one religious philosophy should govern the law for all Americans."

   Yes! Human life has dignity and value. Period. Philosophical views that impinge on the right to life of entire classes of people – such as the unborn, racial or ethnic minorities, disabled people, etc. – must be repudiated. Science is settled on the matter of when human life begins – at conception – and has finally caught up to what is depicted in the Bible on numerous occasions. viii It and the ensoulment issue are no longer matters of religious debate.

Any discussion of freedom from a biblical point of view should reference passages such as John 8:32-36, and Galatians 5:1 and 13. Those who are in Christ have been set free from the power of sin. If humanity has been given “freedom of choice,” it is properly exercised in glorifying God rather than indulging self. The author missed an opportunity to exhort readers to a high calling – that of sacrificing personal freedom for service.

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