

LIFEtalk – Factual based

Intro

So who knows what the culture of death includes?

[Ask around again. . .] *The answers you should hear from the audience are: euthanasia, suicide, embryonic stem cell research, and abortion.*

Those are some great answers, guys. [If they missed one make sure to list it for them], but today we are going to focus on abortion because with 3,300 abortions each day in the U.S. alone, it has the greatest effect on our society.

Medical

(Medical Testimony)

The ultimate question: When does life begin?

As surprising as this may seem there is no debate within the medical community as to when life begins. Life begins at conception. Therefore, every “successful” abortion ends the life of a living human being but I am not asking you to take my word for it. Leading embryology textbooks also state this fact. One such textbook states, “Fertilization is an important landmark because, under ordinary circumstances, a new, genetically distinct human organism is thereby formed.”¹ A NEW DISTINCT HUMAN IS FORMED – got that? We just have to look to science to confirm that abortion *kills* a human.

We also have evidence on the public record. In 1981 a United States Senate judiciary subcommittee received testimony from a collection of medical experts. This included statements such as:

“The beginning of a single human life is from a biological point of view a simple and straightforward matter – the beginning is conception.”²

“After fertilization has taken place a new human being has come into being. [It] is no longer a matter of taste or opinion...it is plain experimental evidence. Each individual has a very neat beginning, at conception.”³

(Prenatal Development)

As we have seen the moment of fertilization brings into existence a new and unique human being with its own distinct genetic code -- twenty-three chromosomes from the mother and twenty-three chromosomes from the father. A woman’s genetic code for her hair, heart, and lungs is different from the genetic code of her unborn baby. In this tiny zygote there is enough information to control human growth and development for the rest of its life!

86% of abortions are performed during the first trimester (AGI/CDC)⁴. So let’s look and see some of the things the fetus is able to do during this time:

At six weeks from fertilization the brain emits waves which register on an EEG – which is the legal standard for determining if someone is alive after birth. Also the heartbeat can be heard and the fetus may be able to feel pain.

At seven weeks fingers and toes are distinctly separate and knee joints are present. 90% of structures found in an adult human being can be found in an eight week, one inch and a half long embryo.

At nine weeks the fetus's eyelids will close and is also able to suck its thumb and respond to touch.

Fingernails, toenails, and unique fingerprints appear within the tenth week.⁵

So life begins at fertilization.

Is all life of equal value?

Yes. All life has the same value given by God and there's no price tag that can ever match that value. All life is precious and dignified. To demonstrate, I have a 20 dollar bill. Who would like this \$20? [*Wave it around so the audience sees it – after the audience raises their hands continue*] Of course you would, it's \$20.

[*If the speaker is a guy*] Guys, you could go to Best Buy and get some DVD's or CD's. Girls you could go buy whatever girls buy with \$20.

[*If the speaker is a girl*] Girls, you could go to the mall and buy clothes or jewelry. Guys you could go buy whatever guys buy with \$20.

Now I'm going to crumple this up into a very tiny ball of paper, who still wants this? [*Again the audience will raise their hands*] Oh you still want it? How about if I throw this on the ground, stomp on it, and rub it into the carpet with my foot? [*Make sure to actually do this*] Pretty gross, huh? You don't know where my shoe has been and now this bill is all dirty. Who still wants it? [*Again the audience will raise their hands*] Of course you do. This bill has the same value no matter what condition it is in. Whether it's small like an unborn baby, wrinkled and old like an elderly person, or unclean or terminally ill, it still has the same value.

Catholic Version/Theological Part (omit for ecumenical groups)

Paragraph 2270 of the Catholic Church's Catechism teaches us that "Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person – among which are the inviolable right of every innocent being to life." This teaching has not been changed since the first century. Now who considers themselves pro-life? [*The audience should raise their hands*]

Answer—That's good. We as Catholics must believe this teaching. Our former Holy Father, John Paul II has called this "the greatest civil rights movement of our time." Mother Teresa has said, "It is a poverty that a child must die so you may live as you wish." We as Catholics should be obedient to the church's teaching, but we won't stop there. We need to know the truth so we can educate our friends who don't have the church. We need to motivate ourselves to do something. And here's why:

Historical

March 6th 1857 and January 22nd 1973 – what do these two dates have in common? [*Ask around the audience*]

They declared a portion of society as non-persons; they valued one group of people more than another. In 1857 it was the whites who were valued more than the blacks. In this day and age the born are valued more than the unborn. In our society today young people are valued more than the elderly, the healthy more than the sick, and the able more than the disabled, and so on. History shows the capacity human beings have for abusing other human beings. Crimes against humanity generally refer to any large-scale atrocity committed against a group of innocent human beings. The most notorious example, of course, is the Jewish Holocaust, in which six million European Jews were executed for their racial heritage.⁶

How many abortions do you think take place everyday in the United States?

I mentioned it earlier, does anyone remember? [*Ask around, answering higher or lower to their answers – after about 3 guesses, continue on*]

Each day around 3,300 abortions occur. [*Repeat and say slowly and emphatically to make an impact*] 3,300. That accounts for 1.2 million babies per year. Since 1973 almost 45 million babies have been killed.⁷ 45 million is hard for me to grasp; so I'm going to put that number in terms that I hope will make it easier to comprehend. According to the 2005 World Atlas, the population of Canada is about 32 million. So basically it would be like wiping out Canada 1 ½ times. A whole country just gone! [*At times we have had someone from the audience yell, "Yeah," when we use Canada as an example. Just play it off and joke – say something like "Yeah, Canada's not my favorite country either but to think that America has aborted 1 ½ times the population of Canada is pretty sad.*] Every 26 seconds a baby is aborted. 1 in 5 pregnancies end in abortion.⁸ You get the idea . . . there have been a lot of abortions since its legalization in 1973.

(A blob of tissue?)

Those who advocate abortion would like us to believe that the unborn child is just a blob of tissue, that “a fetus of 12 weeks or 3 months cannot in anyway be compared to a fully formed person and at this stage only rudiments of the organ system are present.” [*Hold up picture provided by PPL*] Does this look like a blob of tissue? This is an eight week old person. This person has arms and legs, fingers and toes, eyes, a brain, and a beating heart [*Point to parts*]. Here pass this around and see for yourself. [*Pass picture to audience*] This person has a unique DNA and at 10 weeks a unique trait that may interest the FBI someday – fingerprints. Nobody ever had or will have the same set.

Abortion supporters may say that the unborn are not really people. This is what Hitler said about the Holocaust. This is what America said when it used to count blacks as 3/5 of a person. If the unborn are people, which in fact they are, then abortion is not just a crime against humanity but the greatest holocaust in all of history!

Facts about Abortion

Let's take a look at some facts about abortion:

Is abortion legal through all nine months of pregnancy?

Yes. On January 22, 1973 the United States Supreme Court delivered their opinions in two landmark cases that would make abortion legal in the United States. Roe v. Wade holds that abortions are legal for any reason a woman chooses, up until the point of viability, that is, when

the baby can live outside of the mother's womb and that abortion after viability should be available when needed to protect a woman's health.⁹ Doe v. Bolton took it one step further holding that a woman's health must be allowed to include her age, family situation, emotional and physical state, and social circumstances.¹⁰ What does this mean? Unlimited abortion for any reason for all nine months of pregnancy.

Why do women have abortions?

Those who support abortion want us to believe that we need abortion for cases of rape or incest or for fetal abnormalities when, in fact, the statistics show that the number one reason for abortion is as a means of birth control – simply because the mother doesn't want the baby. The truth is that:

- Less than 1% of abortions are because of cases of rape.¹¹
- Only 3% are because the baby has a possible health problem¹²
- And 4% are because the mother has a health problem¹³

Operations that are performed to save the life of the mother – such as the removal of a cancerous uterus or an ectopic pregnancy – are considered indirect abortions. All other abortions are direct abortions that purposely end the life of a pre-born child and are never necessary to save a mother's life.

The fact is that there are only three circumstances in which both the mother and child are dying: ectopic pregnancy, cancer of the uterus, and accidental traumatic injury to the fetus.

Does the baby feel pain?

Yes, a baby feels pain while being aborted! It is a scientific fact that the nervous system develops at 8 weeks gestation. By this age the neuro-anatomic structures are present. Try sticking an infant with a pin and you know what happens. She opens her mouth to cry and also pulls away. Try sticking an 8 week old human fetus in the palm of his hand. He opens his mouth and pulls his hand away.¹⁴ According to a neurologist, unborn babies between 20 and 30 weeks development may actually feel pain more intensely than adults.¹⁵ He says this is a, "uniquely vulnerable time, since the pain system is fully established; yet the higher-level pain-modifying system has barely begun to develop."¹⁶ There were two bills introduced to congress in 2007 that would ensure that women seeking an abortion after 20 weeks are fully informed regarding the pain experienced by their unborn child.¹⁷ Both bills would require the abortion doctor to do two things. First, it would require the doctor to tell the mother that her baby will feel pain during the abortion and second it gives her the option of giving pain killers to her baby.

Political

Now that we know the facts, let's take a look at some of the issues about abortion. In the political realm we really have two questions to answer. 1) Are they human beings? And 2) Should they be recognized as persons under the law? The first question has already been answered. It is a matter of plain, objective science. EMBRYOS AND FETUSES ARE FULLY AND INDIVIDUALLY HUMAN FROM THE MOMENT OF FERTILIZATION ON. If not, then removing a fetus would just be like pulling out a tooth. But this isn't the case. If you looked up the word "person" in the dictionary, you would find something like this: "a human being." (from Webster's) A person is a human being. This should be enough to guarantee protection under the law but it isn't. That is just astounding to me! But when you look at

American history there are at least two other instances in which specific groups of human beings were stripped of their rights of personhood. Do you know what two I'm talking about? We have already mentioned one. I'm referring to African-Americans and Native Americans. The legal system has worked to remove such injustices but today there remains one group of human beings for which being human is not enough. What is a person? A person is a human being – unless, of course, you haven't been born yet, in which case we'll define personhood in any way possible so as to exclude you, kill you, and forget you. Welcome to America.

(The “Choice” Façade)

While many people who support abortion do not like to talk about facts or science, they love to talk about “choice.” “This is America. . . We're free to choose . . . You can't legislate morality!” This makes the politics of this debate even more confusing. However, let's look at the bottom line – how our laws really work. Choice is nothing if you take it away from the circumstance and context to which it applies. The fact is laws against murder, theft, speeding, drunk-driving, and even smoking are all “anti-choice.” They take away legal protection from one particular choice in order to protect a more foundational freedom. These laws are “legislating morality” but that is the only way our society can survive. Besides, in almost 99% of all U.S. abortions¹⁸, the woman having the abortion chose to have sexual intercourse in the first place. Abortion does not keep a woman from being pregnant but ends the pregnancy of an already pregnant woman by killing the unborn child living within her. So, in the end, we are only free to choose so long as that choice doesn't kill or harm someone else. The issue is not about choice but about humanity.

(Competing Rights)

Abortion is an issue involving competing rights. On one hand we have the right of a mother not to be pregnant and on the other hand we have the baby's right not to be killed. Which right is more fundamental? Which right makes the greatest claim? Someone might ask, “How can you make the rights of a fetus more important than a grown woman?” But outlawing abortion would not give unborn children more rights, it would just give them the most fundamental right in which no one can live without – the right to life. If a pregnant woman remains pregnant, what will she have to go through? She will have to go through sickness, fatigue, reduced mobility, an enlarged body, and a new wardrobe. Is this a permanent condition? No. On the flip side of the coin, if a pregnant woman is not to remain pregnant, then the unborn child must be killed. Abortion costs the unborn child his/her very own life. Is this a permanent condition? Yeah, I would say so. So, I would say that it is not about who is more important but who has more on the line.

Imagine for a minute that you are at a crosswalk. I am coming down the road in my fabulous car and you are crossing the street. The law requires that I am to slow down and stop so you can cross in front of me. Why? Why do I have to stop so you can cross the street? Is it because you are more valued than me? It is because if I don't stop then you will likely be killed. If I don't stop it will cost you your life. But if I let you finish crossing the street, it will only cost me a few minutes of driving time. So you see, for a pregnant woman to stay pregnant her freedoms might temporarily be taken from her but it would save the life of her unborn child.

Conditional Case (What determines Personhood?)

Did you know that there are only four basic ways in which an unborn child is different from a newborn baby? The first is size. But size doesn't matter. It is legal to kill a fly and not a human not because the fly is smaller but because the person is human. Humanity is what matters. Think about this, many newborn babies born prematurely are smaller than other unborn children still in their mother's womb. Yet, these unborn children may be legally aborted. Size does not determine personhood after birth so it shouldn't determine personhood before birth. The second difference is level of development. But this difference is also insignificant. Children are less developed than adults. People with developmental disabilities may be less developed than some children and those with extraordinary mental capacity are no more human than someone with average IQ. In the end, brain capacity or arm strength doesn't determine personhood. The third difference is environment. An unborn child lives inside the womb and the newborn baby lives outside the womb. Can location define personhood? The unborn child in his/hers mother's womb may be dependent upon the mother but is not part of the mother's body. The last difference, and most common, is that, "Since a fetus can't survive on its own, it has no inherent right to life." What is the problem with this argument? We can extend it to include ALL of humanity! That's right. We are all dependent human beings. Many people are dependent upon kidney machines or insulin shots for their survival but that doesn't mean they lose their personhood. The dependency of unborn children should mean that they deserve more protection, not less!

Philosophical (Unwantedness)

But what if the child is not wanted? If the child is not wanted, why should it be born? However, the problem is not wantedness but the fact that the child has already been conceived. So the only way to stop it from being born is to kill it. No one would agree that children waiting for adoption should be killed because they are currently "unwanted" and no one would agree that mothers should be able to kill their "unwanted" children after birth.

Wantedness is not a basis on which personhood is measured. Abortionists know this; therefore, the question is not wantedness but again humanity. Science has already revealed that these unborn children are living human beings. Besides, even if the biological parents of an unborn child do not want to care for their baby, there are many, many families who wish to adopt.

(Poverty)

Let's turn to the issue of poverty. If a mother is unable to afford raising her child, should she be able to abort her pregnancy? In reality that means that if a mother believes her child is going to be too expensive, then she has a right to kill her child. Think of the many children in America who are born into poverty-stricken families. Has anyone suggested that killing these children is a solution to poverty? No amount of financial hardship is sufficient rationale for killing another human being, particularly an innocent child.

Finally, it is simply not true to suggest that there are *any* women in America who cannot afford to carry their pregnancy to term. There are now [more crisis pregnancy care centers in this country than there are abortion providers](#). Let me repeat that: there are now more crisis pregnancy care centers in this country than there are abortion providers. These centers bring women through their pregnancies by providing them the emotional and financial

assistance they need to carry to term and, if need be, place for adoption (which would relieve all future financial obligation). Any woman who is pregnant, no matter what her financial situation, can receive the resources she needs to carry her baby to term.

(Disability)

What if it is discovered that the child might have a physical or mental disability? Should this reason suggest that abortion is okay? Does disease or handicap somehow strip a person of their right to live? There are children of all ages, and adults too, who are alive today and are living through all manner of disease and disability. Do these physical limitations make them less than human? Is killing everyone who is sick really an acceptable way to treat sickness?

Anyone who argues that abortion should be used to prevent a life of suffering is assuming that the unborn child is not yet a living human being. But this is exactly the point that they must prove before they can even begin to make such claims. We do not kill people for their disabilities, period.

The pressure to abort handicapped babies is built largely on the mere "likelihood" that a child has some kind of disability. Often, the tests prove wrong, and more often still, these children, if allowed to live, end up with lives of joy and happiness that far exceeds those of their "more healthy" peers. Suffering and hardship are not bad things. They are means to a greater end, a crucial part of the human journey. Anyone who tries to eliminate suffering by killing the "sufferers" is establishing a very, very dangerous trend! It is not for us to decide who has a life worth living and who doesn't, and we certainly wouldn't want someone else making that decision for us!

But the real fact is, abortion advocates support killing babies whether they have disabilities or not. They're not arguing that abortion should be limited to fetuses with severe handicaps. They're arguing that the mother, alone, should have the right to kill her baby for any reason under the sun, and to me that is the most shocking reality of all.

(Drug Addiction)

It is not uncommon to hear an abortion advocate ask something like this, "Do you really think a coke-addict, woman should be forced to have a baby that will grow up being addicted to crack and living on the street?" This is basically saying that a baby is better off dead than being born with a drug addiction.

Do we deal with drug addiction by killing everyone who is addicted to drugs? No we don't. And we certainly wouldn't suggest such treatment for those whose addiction is of no fault of their own.

The tragic irony in America today is that, in most states, women can be prosecuted for "fetal abuse" if they take harmful drugs during their pregnancy, but these same women are perfectly free to hire someone to *kill* their baby if they so choose. Mothers are free to *kill*, but not free to *harm*?! This sense of justice doesn't make much sense to me. Unborn children should be protected from harm *and* death.

(Rape)

You can't get very far in any discussion about abortion without considering the question of rape. If a woman didn't choose to engage in sex in the first place, should she have to carry to term a child that was the result of her forced union? Let's say for a moment that the woman does carry her child to term and decides to raise her daughter herself. After five years, however, she decides that the little girl's presence in her life is too much of a burden. Should that mother have the right to kill her five year-old daughter who was born to her as a result of sexual assault?

Obviously not. No matter what the circumstances are regarding the little girl's conception, she is a human being with a right to life that cannot be taken away from her. But what about before she is born, does this change anything? No, it doesn't. [Abortion is an act of violence that kills a living human being.](#)¹⁹ The circumstances surrounding the conception do not change this simple reality. Rape and abortion share this in common. They are both acts of violent assault against an innocent victim. Aborting a child conceived through rape simply extends this pattern of violence and victimhood. It does not "unrape" the woman, but it will increase her regret and misery. Whereas rape is an act of violence for which she bears no responsibility, abortion is an act of violence for which she would be morally culpable.

An email written in January of 2007 by a woman who was conceived through rape might help to shed more light on this issue. She writes, "I know it is traumatizing for a girl or woman that is raped to have to carry a child, but it is no more traumatizing than someone who gets shot during a violent attack and has to deal with those wounds. Counseling and therapy can help heal the trauma, but the trauma will be there whether she has the abortion or not, and the abortion could even make it worse. It has caused me so much anxiety over the years to think that many pro-lifers would have approved of my mother's abortion. By the way, she gave me up for adoption, and my adoptive parents were never able to have children."²⁰

In reality, cases of rape are extremely rare and only make up 1% of all abortions.²¹ Still, the issue here is that despite the circumstances these unborn children are living human beings.

(“Women will do it Anyway”)

The final, last-ditch plea states yes, abortion is an act of violence. Yes, it kills a living human being. Yes, it is wrong, BUT... "women will do it anyway" (so it should be legal). This reasoning doesn't work for two reasons.

First, every form of lawless behavior imaginable could be rationalized with this same, "people are going to do it anyway" nonsense. "Banks are going to be robbed whether it's lawful or not so let's make it legal." "People are going to run red lights whether it's lawful or not so let's make it legal." The list could go on and on. Laws against anti-social behavior do not eliminate such behavior altogether, but they certainly drive the numbers way down.

What if the argument is made from the standpoint of safety? "If women can't abort legally, they'll do so illegally, and it will be much more dangerous for them." While [this claim is not true](#)²², even it were, nothing would change. Abortion would still be unjustified. Wouldn't it be absurd to try and legalize armed robbery by arguing that granting such measures would make it much safer for the burglars to obtain what they're trying to steal? Laws must protect the potential victim, not the potential assailant.

The second problem with this "women will do it anyway" argument is that it only holds true for a small percentage of the population. One need only look at the frequency of abortion since it was first legalized to see that legal abortion DOES play a huge role in whether or not a woman will choose to have an abortion.

Should abortion again be outlawed at a future date, it would cease to be a viable option for most American women. The evidence is clear – legislation cannot eliminate such behavior altogether, but it can drive the frequency way down, sparing countless innocent victims from the injustice that would otherwise be theirs.

Photographic Evidence

(If movie to be shown)

Right now I'm going to make it real to you. Why? Because every fact that I tell you and every statistic that I share with you isn't enough. Some can never truly grasp abortion and the effects of abortion if they can't see it with their own eyes. We are going to show this today with a video called Victims of Choice. This video shows babies before and after abortion and is very graphic. Why is this video important? Look at the Nazi Holocaust footage. Those videos weren't shown to manipulate students. The death camps represented an evil so great that words and lectures could not accurately describe it. The same is true about abortion. Until America sees it, we will not reject it. By making this movie short, 4 minutes, and eliminating narration we allow you to avoid the contents all together simply by looking away, closing your eyes or coming with us in the hall. We hope you will watch because: ignorance sustained by denial is crippling this country into believing abortion is acceptable. Until you see what abortion does, you will never understand what abortion is. I would like to leave you with this thought: if something like this is so horrible to look at, we shouldn't be tolerating it. [*Ask the audience if anyone would like to leave and then start the video*].

(If movie is not to be seen)

At this point we normally show a video called Victims of Choice. This video shows babies before and after abortion and is very graphic. We will not be showing this video to you today but if you would like to obtain a copy of this video, please let us know. We can send you a free copy with your parent's permission. Why is this video important? Look at the Nazi Holocaust footage. Those videos weren't shown to manipulate students. The death camps represented an evil so great that words and lectures could not accurately describe it. The same is true about abortion. Until America sees it, we will not reject it. Ignorance sustained by denial is crippling this country into thinking that abortion is acceptable. If something like this is so horrible to look at then maybe we shouldn't be tolerating it.

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