

## **Abortion**

The Wilmington Church of Christ considers the Bible to be the inspired Word of God and therefore our single guide in all matters of doctrine, including the beginning of life. Our position regarding the issue of abortion is that human life begins at the point of conception and that voluntary abortion is therefore equivalent to murdering the life of an innocent person.

All sin, even murder, can be forgiven because of the atoning death of Jesus Christ, so our message to those who have had abortions is one that emphasizes the seriousness of sin and the availability of God's grace to all. And while in human terms, we emotionally think of one sin as being worse than another; from God's righteous vantage, all sin, no matter how black or "gray", required the death of his Son and by extension makes us all guilty of the death of an innocent child.

Our conviction that life begins at conception is rooted in our understanding of God's Word. The Old Testament legislated that if two fighting men hit a pregnant woman and caused a miscarriage, the punishment was "life for life" (Ex. 21:22-25). David said in Psalm 139, "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. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be" (Psalm 139:13-16). The baby in Elizabeth's womb (John the Baptist) "leaped for joy" when Elizabeth saw Mary and heard the good news that Mary would bear the Christ child (Luke 1:44). The Bible repeatedly emphasizes that we are human and have a human soul even before we are born. All of these citations point to the idea that God considers an unborn child to be alive in his or her own right and so we accept this as truth.

Sadly, we recognize the practice of abortion has become increasingly common in our society. Twenty-seven to thirty-three percent of all pregnancies in the United States end in abortion. Abortion for some has become just another method of birth control. The truth is: The stopping of the heartbeat with his or her own unique genetic makeup, personality and potential is legal within the womb of a woman; whereas, the same actions outside of the womb would be considered inhumane and murderous.

The Bible says that sex is to be reserved for marriage because of the intimacy of the sexual relationship and the prospect that a child will result. A person should not engage in sexual relations unless he or she is married and willing and able to support the life of a child. Children are intended to be a blessing from God to a loving husband and wife. The only birth control method with 100 percent surety is abstinence.



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Even so, when an unmarried person becomes pregnant, God's grace can still cover that sin and bring good out of evil. We encourage unmarried parents to consider whether they are mature enough to care for the child, get married, and raise the child together. If they reach the conclusion that they are not, we would encourage them to consider whether other family members could assist them in raising the child correctly. Each year, hundreds of thousands of couples in the United States wait with the hopeful prayer that a child will be born and put up for adoption that they may love and raise as their own.

The Wilmington Church of Christ wants to respond to the abortion issue with both truth and love. It is our conviction that the Church should serve as a conscience in the community, speaking out about moral issues from a biblical perspective. We are convinced that abortion on demand should never have been legalized in 1973 and that our communities have suffered because of that poor judicial decision. However, we also acknowledge that reversing this decision could well take years and distract the Church from its primary goal of introducing Christ to the world. The best and perhaps fastest way to stop abortions is not through legislation but by winning people to Jesus Christ and changing one heart at a time.

If you or someone you know has gone through the trauma--both physically and emotionally--we do not want you to feel alone. We want you to understand that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, and yet He still came and loved us enough to die for us. There is mercy and forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

We would encourage you to seek out Christian counseling, rather than running and trying to hide from God what He already knows fully. What has happened cannot be undone, but the Heavenly Father has promised that we can be made whole again in Christ. We look forward to the opportunity to talk with you, perhaps mourn with you, and introduce you to the Only One who can touch your life and fill it with His Love.