

BCC Policy: Abortion

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Because BCC regards the Bible as God's Word, it is our authority for determining God's perspective on this and every issue. Several key questions related to abortion are: Is the embryo or fetus a human person? When does human life begin? When does the fetus have a right to life? The Bible provides sufficient direction to answer these questions and equips us with a solid foundation for our position related to abortion.

Under the inspiration of God's Spirit, David declares, "You formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance (*golem* in Hebrew); in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them." (Ps 139:13-16) David uses *golem*, the Hebrew word for embryo, as distinct from the word describing a formed fetus or child. This psalm begins with "you have searched me and you know me," showing the relationship God intended with the created being in the womb. The embryo is a spiritual person under God's loving concern and protection. Because the embryo is hidden from view, it is no less valuable to God.

Two examples illustrate how God's plan and purpose for life extends to life *in utero*. In the life of Jeremiah: Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations." (Jer 1:5) Significant life and personhood is determined by God's claim to our lives in relationship with Him. In the life of John the baptizer, God chose a fetus to miraculously respond to spiritual truth, as a sign of humanity's rejoicing over the coming of Jesus as Savior (Lk 1:39-45).

The Law given by God to Moses specifies a situation where two men are fighting and injure a pregnant woman. If harm results to the baby or to the mother, the penalty to the one causing the injury was determined by the principle of "life for life, eye for eye ..." (Ex 21:22-25), indicating the unborn infant is considered deserving of the same protection under the law as any other living person.

Rather than existing as a random collection of genetic material, life in the womb is formed by God for his purposes (Is 44:2, 24; Job 10:8-12; 31:15; Eph 2:10). God stamps his image on every human being (*imago Dei*), which distinguishes humans from all other living, created beings (Ge 1:27). Man is given the capacity to mirror and reflect the nature of God and to

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portray God's character. This has bearing on the ethics of our actions, because they reflect the character of God to others. Because we are in God's image, we can have a relationship with Him. Humans did not cease being images of God at the fall. However, because our nature was corrupted, we no longer clearly express God's character. Our human dignity and value do not rest in our intelligence, productivity, or achievements, that is in our usefulness to others or society. Instead, our dignity is rooted in our relationship with God. God's concern for that relationship begins in the womb. It is difficult to conceive how abortion could possibly be consistent with loving God with all our heart and loving others as ourselves.

The human embryo meets the genetic and biologic criteria of human life, and we have seen that God's purpose and concern extend to life in the womb. Because secular society has adopted a worldview that individuals determine what is meaningful and significant within themselves, a pregnancy that jeopardizes our personal happiness and fulfillment is viewed as unwanted and expendable. In a society that worships autonomy and self-determination, where no transcendent meaning beyond this life is considered, the embryo is not considered significant human life worthy of protection.

We live in a fallen world, and you or others you know may have had an abortion. Abortion is not an unforgivable sin. Whatever your past, the Lord can redeem evil for good, and He offers forgiveness to those who trust in Him. As Christians, we can speak a message of hope and rescue, showing our love and care for women who are in difficult or unfortunate situations with their pregnancies and support those ministries that provide alternatives to abortion.