

PassionLife

4

QUESTIONS



Answering the Crisis of
Abortion with the Gospel of Life

The 4 Questions

Answering the Crisis of Abortion with the Gospel of Life

"The gospel of life" is our way of summarizing all that God says and summons in the Bible regarding human life. It points to the special dignity and eternal destiny that God gives to every human being. What follows, in the form of a catechism, is the gospel of life explained and applied to the greatest bioethical challenge of our time: abortion, infanticide and gendercide. Four questions serve as a framework for the larger question; how then should we live?

The 4 Questions:

- 1) What does God say about human life, including life in the womb?
- 2) What does God say about the shedding of innocent blood, including abortion?
- 3) How do we bring the grace of the gospel to the guilt of abortion, so that people are forgiven and set free?
- 4) What does God call us to do to stop the shedding of innocent blood and how have others done so?

Question 1: what does God say about human life, including life in the womb?

How does the Bible define life?

1) God is life:

- "Whoever finds me finds life" (Proverbs 8:35).
- "He is the breath of life" (Genesis 2:7).
- "He is your life" (Deuteronomy 30:20).

2) God gives life:

- "In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind" (Job 12:10).

3) God cherishes life:

- He is the upholder of life in Psalm 54:4.
- He is the preserver of life in Genesis 45:5.
- He is the keeper of life in Psalm 121:7.
- He is the fountain of life in Proverbs 14:27.
- He is the redeemer of life in Psalm 72:14.

4) The gift of Christ is the gift of life:

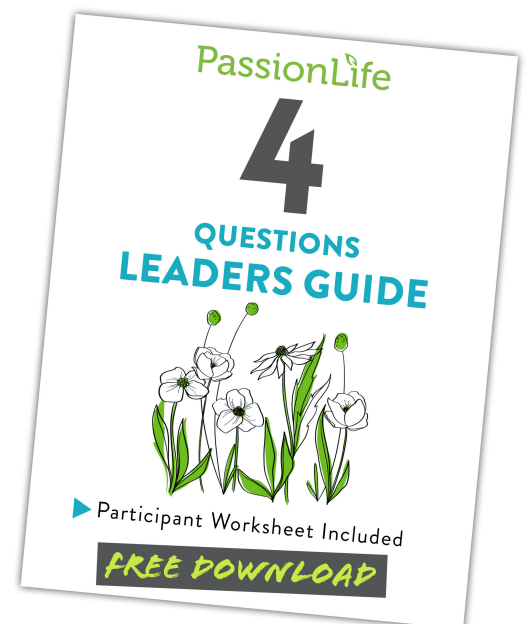
- Jesus is called the light of life in John 8:12.
- Jesus is the abundance of life John 10:10.
- Jesus is everlasting life in John 3:16.

5) The gospel of Christ is a gospel of life:

- "For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ...an aroma that brings life" (2 Corinthians 2:16).

What does God value most in all the world?

He values human life—people—individually and altogether.



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- “You have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor” (Psalm 8:5).
- “You are of more value than many sparrows” (Matthew 10:31).

How do we know that God values human life more than all else in this world?

Because unlike the rest of creation, God made human life in his own image, to reflect his own glory.

- “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ 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).

What value does Genesis 1:26-27 place on every human being?

- *Intrinsic value*: Our humanity alone, rather than our capacities or abilities, makes us valuable to God.
- *Equal value*: All people, male and female, from every “tribe and tongue” throughout the ages are equal.
- *Exceptional value*: Human beings are more valuable than anything else in creation.
- *Eternal value*: As image bearers of the eternal God, we possess a special dignity and eternal destiny.

What are some of the implications of human life created in the image of God?

- Every human being is of inestimable worth and significance in all its stages.
- There is a common unity/equality of value between all peoples. Acts 17:26
- It is right to acknowledge natural rights which are endowed to every human being. Proverbs 29:7
- It is right to acknowledge the principle of equal rights among all human beings. Proverbs 29:7
- To curse or hate other people or groups of people is to attack God, their Creator. James 3:9
- To help the weak is to honor God. Proverbs 14:31
- There is no favoritism in God in dealing with different people/peoples. Act 10:34
- There is no natural or true racial inferiority or superiority.
- There is no natural or true gender inferiority or superiority.
- It is necessary to defend the natural rights of the poor, the afflicted, and the powerless because they are the first to have their rights abridged and they cannot defend themselves. Proverbs 31:8-9
- The intrinsic, equal, and exceptional value of human life is the motivating principle for all works of justice and mercy done for the weak, powerless and oppressed. Job 29:12-17; 30:13-15

What is God’s attitude then towards procreation, children, and family?

God highly esteems children and family, calling his commission to reproduce a blessing.

- “And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Genesis 1:28).
- “The esteem in which children were held in ancient Israel...can be attributed to several factors and convictions: (1) the belief that every human being is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27, Psalm 8); (2) the view that children ensure the perpetuation of humanity and the fulfillment of the divine mandate to subdue and cultivate the earth (Genesis 1:26, 5:1f, 9:18-19); (3) the notion that the conception of children was ultimately a product of divine action and hence a sign of God’s favor (with the corollary that barrenness was a sign of divine disfavor); (4) the valuing of children as an important economic asset; (5) the belief that in a sense parents live on in and through their children (hence one’s worse fate was for one’s “seed” to be cut off and one’s name to be blotted out; cf 1 Samuel

24:21, 2 Samuel 14:7, Psalm 37:28, Isa 14:20-21)." —Andreas J. Köstenberger, *God, Marriage and Family*, 99.

When does human life begin? Is the unborn a human being?

God sees children as children, whether unborn, newborn, toddler or youth.

1) Old Testament:

- a. The Hebrew word "child" (yeled), refers to an infant in Exodus 2:9, a toddler in Genesis 21:8, and a youth or young man in Genesis 4:23. But in Exodus 21:22 it is used to refer to unborn children. Likewise, the Hebrew word, habanim, means "children." It is used to refer to children born and unborn. In Genesis 25: 22, concerning Rebekah's unborn twins, we read, "The children struggled together within her." Elsewhere, the word is used for children in general. For example, Psalm 113:9, says, "He gives the barren woman a home making her the joyous mother of children."
- b. David saw himself as a person in the womb and referred to himself in personal pronouns.
 - "You formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb" (Psalm 139:13).

2) New Testament

- a. The Greek word "baby" (brephos) is used to refer to unborn and newborn babies alike.
 - "When Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb" (Luke 1:41).
 - "They...found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger" (Luke 2:16).
- b. The unborn child, John the Baptist, worshipped the unborn, yet fully human, Son of God. It was a womb to womb worship service.
 - "When Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb... and she exclaimed, '...blessed is the fruit of your womb! ...For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy'" (Luke 1:40-44).
- c. The person, Jesus, was developmentally a zygote (just a few days or perhaps a week old) when John worshipped him from the womb. How do we know this? The virgin, Mary, lived in Nazareth when the angel appeared and told her that she will become pregnant by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:26). Verse 39 says Mary received the news and traveled "with haste" to visit Elizabeth. Elizabeth lived in "the hill country of Judah" near Jerusalem, where her husband served at the temple (Luke 1:5-9). Mary traveled approximately 115-150 KLM (70-95 miles). When she arrived, Mary was pregnant.

Depending on her travel speed, and actual distance, Jesus was a day, a few days, perhaps a week old, when Elizabeth greeted Mary. John, as an unborn child, leaped for joy and announced the coming of the Lord to his mother.

This Lord, fully God and fully human, was fully present, though probably smaller than the period at the end of this sentence.

- 3) The Bible points to conception as the beginning of a person's life. For example, Genesis 4:1 says, "Now Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bore Cain." Cain's life started at conception. Likewise, Mary is told that she will conceive "a son" and then give birth to "a son" (Luke 1:31). She is told that Elizabeth has also "conceived a son" (Luke 1:36). This formulaic description of the beginning of human life is common (Genesis 4:17, 21:2, Job 3:3, Ho 1:6).

Does science teach the same thing that the Bible says, that human life begins at conception?

Yes. Fetal embryology teaches us that at conception (fertilization) a 1) living, 2) distinct, and 3) whole human being comes into existence and develops and matures from within.

- “A zygote is the beginning of a new human being. Human development begins at fertilization, the process during which a male gamete or sperm ... unites with a female gamete or oocyte ... to form a single cell called a zygote. This highly specialized, totipotent cell marks the beginning of each of us as a unique individual.” —Keith L. Moore & T.V.N. Persaud, *The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology*, 16.

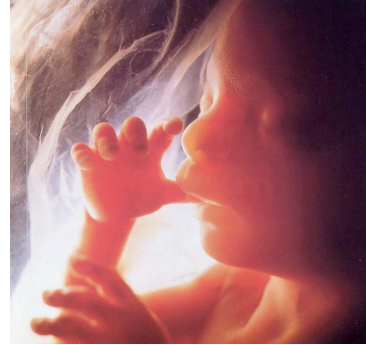
Fetal Development



8 Weeks



11 Weeks



13 Weeks

Question 2: what does God say about the shedding of innocent blood, including abortion?

What we love the most, we protect the most. God is the same. We confirmed in Question 1 that among all that God created, what he loves the most is human life.

God protects human life in different ways. But the primary way God protects human life is through his moral law.

- *Negatively stated:* “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13).
- *Positively stated:* “You shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord” (Leviticus 19:18).

The negative law prohibits *intentionally* killing an *innocent* human life. The positive law calls for protective actions. For example,

- “When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof, that you may not bring the guilt of blood upon your house, if anyone should fall from it.” (Deuteronomy 22:8).

God enforces his law with the warning of wrath and judgment on those who shed innocent blood.

- “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: A city that brings on herself doom by shedding blood in her midst...you have become guilty because of the blood you have shed” (Ezekiel 22:3).
- “The Lord sent... Chaldeans ...against Judah to destroy it...Surely this came upon Judah at the command of the Lord, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, and also for the innocent blood that he had shed. For he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood and the Lord would not pardon” (2 Kings 24:2-4).

God brings wrath and judgment on those who are indifferent to murder (tacitly approve of it).

- “The elders...shall testify, ‘Our hands did not shed this blood, nor did our eyes see it shed...So you shall purge the guilt of innocent blood from your midst, when you do what is right in the sight of the Lord’” (Deuteronomy 21:6-9).

God separates himself from the blood-guilty, ignoring their prayers until they are prayers of repentance.

- “When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves... remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes...cease to do evil... seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause” (Isaiah 1:15-17).

God warns even the visible Christian community of judgment for shedding innocent blood.

- “You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered the innocent one, who was not opposing you” (James 5:5-6).

God comforts the victims of unjust violence with the promise of just judgment against their violators.

- “For he who avenges blood is mindful of them; he does not forget the cry of the afflicted” (Psalm 9:12).

Does God look at abortion as the shedding of innocent blood?

Abortion, like other modern references to murder, (lynching, genocide, etc.) is a word not used in the Bible. God forbids abortion by forbidding murder: the unjust taking of human life. We know this includes the unborn because the Bible (and science) confirm the humanity of the unborn. Abortion is the shedding of innocent blood of an unborn human life.

What else does the Bible teach about the value of children?

Among all categories of innocent human life, God particularly values children and wants them protected.

- “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea” (Matthew 18:5-6).

Among all the ways we murder, child-sacrifice is supremely offensive to God.

- “Any one of the people of Israel who gives any of his children to Molech shall surely be put to death...and if the people of the land do at all close their eyes to that man when he gives one of his children to Molech...then I will set my face against that man and against his clan...and all who follow him in whoring after Molech” (Leviticus 20:2-5).

God sees child-sacrifice as the violent murder of his own children.

- “You took your sons and your daughters, whom you had borne to me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured. Were your whorings so small a matter that you slaughtered my children and delivered them up as an offering by fire to them?” (Ezekiel 16:20-21).

Child-sacrifice is such a preeminent evil, that God calls it an *unthinkable* abomination.

- “They built the high places of Baal in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to offer up their sons and daughters to Molech, though I did not command them, nor did it enter into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin” (Jeremiah 32:35).

Is abortion child-sacrifice?

Yes. Both involve:

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- parents intentionally killing their own children.
- burning or cutting.
- exchanging a human life for something else, either killing to avoid a negative consequence or to secure a benefit. When people abort their unborn child to save their reputation, get a college degree, save money, hide their sexual sin, or please others, they are sacrificing their children in order to avoid a negative consequence or obtain some other benefit. The most painful truth in confessing our regret over abortion is that we sacrificed our children for things of lesser value.

What about physically-forced abortion, as in China?

People can be so cruel as to kill unborn babies by force as well as newborn babies and toddlers (Hosea 13:16). Falling victim to such oppression is an occasion for “weeping and loud lamentation” like the mothers of Bethlehem (Mt 2:18). Such things will happen, but woe to them that cause it: “I will not revoke [their] punishment, because they have ripped open pregnant women in Gilead” (Amos 1:13). Forced abortion, like rape, is an act of violence suffered. There is no guilt attached to those who suffer violence.

Question 3: how do we bring the grace of the gospel to the guilt of abortion, so that people are forgiven and set free?

What is our only hope?

Our only hope is the gospel. On the cross, Christ shed his innocent blood to atone for (cover over) our sin of shedding innocent blood. On the cross, Christ suffered the terrible punishment due for all and every one of our sins, including child-killing. God raised Jesus from the dead to assure us of God’s acceptance of Christ’s substitutionary sacrifice for sins. With faith in Christ, we may be confident of God’s forgiveness and experience a cleansed conscience to serve God with peace, joy and confidence.

What keeps people weak and ineffective in their faith toward God?

Unconfessed sin plagues the conscience. Guilt feels like a heavy weight. Shame burns like fire.

- “For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.
For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah
I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I did not cover my iniquity;
I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,’
and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah” (Psalm 32:3-5).

What must I do to be forgiven and set free from my sins, even from the sin of abortion?

- 1) *Admit* that God is just to be angry and right to condemn you for your sins.
 - “For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.
 - Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment” (Psalm 51:3-4).
- 2) *Confess*, grieve and turn away from your sins and ask God to graciously forgive you.
 - “For your name's sake, O LORD, pardon my guilt, for it is great” (Psalm 25:11).
 - “Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret” (2 Corinthians 7:10).

- 3) *Trust* yourself entirely to Christ's gift of suffering the wrath of God in your place, on the cross.
 - "But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).
 - "In him, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7).
- 4) *Apply* the good news to your own conscience and turn your guilt into a bold testimony.
 - "...how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Hebrews 9:14).

What are we trusting Christ to have accomplished on the cross for us?

- 1) We are trusting that Christ died for all our sins, even the ones we are most ashamed of now.
- 2) We are trusting that Christ suffered the full punishment due for each one of our sins, including the just and full punishment we deserve for child-killing

If the just wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), how can God remain just when he forgives us?

God justifies his mercy by punishing Christ in our place. The cross is full punishment paid for full punishment due. Even under our own laws, it is never just to punish someone twice for the same crime. Therefore, God is justified in showing us his mercy because nothing in our lives that deserves punishment has gone unpunished. "If we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God" (Romans 5:9). This is why the gospel is called "good news of great joy!" (Luke 2:10).

Bring this good news specifically to the guilt and grief of abortion. By God's power, tears of confession will yield to joy, confidence, and testimony to the grace of Christ.

Question 4: what does God call us to do to stop the shedding of innocent blood and how have others done so?

Regarding human life, how can we summarize the ethical demands of the Bible?

- 1) God calls us not to murder (Exodus 20:13), meaning, do not intentionally kill an innocent human being.
- 2) God calls us not to be indifferent to the murder of innocents; not to turn our eyes from it. Deuteronomy 21:7
- 3) God calls us to actively intervene; to rescue the innocent.
 - "Rescue those who are being taken away to death;
hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter.
If you say, "Behold, we did not know this,"
does not he who weighs the heart perceive it?
Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it,
and will he not repay man according to his work?" (Proverbs 24:11-12).
 - "Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked" (Psalm 82:3-4).
 - "Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy." (Proverbs 31:8-9).

4) Jesus summarizes all of biblical ethics in Matthew 7:12.

- “So, whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”

What examples do we see of people obeying God’s call to rescue the innocent? How did they do it?

1. Biblical Examples and Methods

- Reuben* rescued Joseph from being murdered by his brothers. He used moral persuasion and earnest pleas to stop the shedding of innocent life.
 - “When Reuben heard it, he rescued him out of their hands, saying, “Let us not take his life.” And Reuben said to them, “Shed no blood” (Genesis 37:21-22).
- The midwives* rescued newborn baby boys from infanticide. They used faith in God to muster defiant courage and with it, refused to obey the policy of the king.
 - “The midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live” (Exodus 1:17).
- Moses’ mother* rescued him. She used secrecy, hiding Moses in a safe home (see Exodus 2:1-10). Later she turned to *adoption* in order to provide him a safe place to grow and to fulfill God’s plan for his life.
 - “He dealt shrewdly with our race and forced our fathers to expose their infants, so that they would not be kept alive. At this time Moses was born; and he was beautiful in God’s sight. And he was brought up for three months in his father’s house, and when he was exposed, Pharaoh’s daughter *adopted* him and brought him up as her own son” (Acts 7:19-21).
- Rahab* rescued the spies. She used deception and was commended for it (Joshua 2, James 2:25).
- Large numbers of people* stood together as one in order to rescue Jonathan.
 - “The people said to Saul, ‘Shall Jonathan die...Far from it! As the Lord lives, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day.’ So the people ransomed Jonathan, so that he did not die” (1 Samuel 14:45).
- Obadiah* rescued 100 prophets from Jezebel. He provided them with a safe place to live.
 - “Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave and fed them with bread and water” (1 Kings 18:4).
- Esther* rescued her people from lawful genocide by working to change the law (see Esther 4:14).
- Jesus* taught us to use practical means and personal resources to save human life, following the model of the life-saving practices of the Samaritan (see Luke 10:25).

2) Historical Examples and Methods

- First Century*: In the first-century Roman world, abortion and infanticide were common. Then the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead filled the hearts of the new believers. They taught one another, “do not murder a child by abortion or kill a newborn infant” (Didache). They rescued babies and adopted them. They personally helped pregnant mothers have their babies.
- Third Century*: Augustine exposed the moral culpability that men bear in abortion. “They provoke women to use poisonous drugs to secure barrenness or else, if unsuccessful in this, to murder the unborn child.”

- c. *Fifth Century*: Justinian taught, "The finder of the baby is to provide Christian care and compassion. They may be adopted, just as we were adopted into the kingdom of grace."
- d. *Sixteenth Century (Reformation)*: John Calvin declared, "Whether declaring God's truth against Satan's falsehoods or in taking up the protection of the good and innocent...we must undergo the offenses and hatred of the world which may imperil either our life, our fortunes, or our honor."
- e. *Nineteenth/ Twentieth Century*: In India, the missionary William Carey stopped babies from being thrown into the river to be eaten by alligators. In Africa, the missionary, Mary Slessor, rescued twins from ritual killing. Christians invented orphanages, created hospitals, and practiced adoption in every place of need. Christians helped slaves escape in the USA. They hid missionaries during the Boxer rebellion in China. They rescued Jews from the Nazis in Europe.

3) Modern Examples and Methods

- a. **Pregnancy Crisis Intervention.** Today, Christians are standing for life by reaching and rescuing mothers and couples in pregnancy crisis. Individually, people are acting as Good Samaritans, offering personal help when they meet someone in a pregnancy-related crisis. Christians and churches also have organized to rescue those near them by opening Pregnancy Help Clinics and Maternity (Mothers) Homes. Over 6,000 such ministries have opened worldwide in the last 45 years. Typically, help begins with a free pregnancy test and medically accurate information regarding her options. It often includes an ultrasound, practical interventional and long-term support in developing a parenting plan or placing for adoption.

What to do and say:

- Express sympathy. Say: I am sad to see you in this difficult situation.
- Listen and learn. Say: Help me understand why having a baby now is difficult.
- Inform. Ask: What do you know about your unborn baby? Abortion? Options?
- Be a Good Samaritan. Say: I will help you have your baby. We will figure it out.

- b. **Apologetics:** Make the case for life in our secular culture.

(1) Summarize the case:

- It is wrong to intentionally kill an innocent human being.
- Abortion intentionally kills an innocent human being.
- Therefore, abortion is wrong.

(2) Use science (embryology) to answer the question, "What is the unborn? Is it human?" See Question 1.

(3) Use philosophy to make the case for equal rights for all people.

"There is no morally significant difference between the embryo that you once were and the adult that you are today that would justify killing you at that early stage of development. Differences in size, level of development, environment, and degree of dependency are not relevant such that we can say that you had no rights as an embryo but you do have rights today." —Stephen Schwartz

But they are so small! True. Embryos are smaller than toddlers, who are smaller than teenagers. The principle of equal rights among all human beings means size is not relevant. Rights do not increase with size. In general, men are larger than women. Does this mean they should have more rights?

But they are in the womb! True. But where you are does not determine what you are. Location is not relevant to the concept of equal rights. You are not less human in your house than on the sidewalk. Nothing happens spiritually or philosophically to a baby simply by moving through the birth canal.

But they are not self-aware! True. Toddlers are less cognitively developed than teenagers. People in surgery are less aware than when awake. But their human rights do not rise and fall with their degree of awareness. Is it morally justifiable to cut their throat while they are in surgery, or is their level of awareness not relevant to their rights?

But they are still dependent! True. All babies, young children, even teenagers are dependent on others. The old and the sick are dependent. Those who are dependent on insulin do not lose their right to life. God says that dependent people are to be cared for, not killed.

c. Exposure

Most people need to see injustice in order to reject it. In turn, injustice usually requires darkness (secrecy) in order to work freely. Therefore, Ephesians 5:11 says, "Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them." This is especially true of abortion. It works in the dark, but when exposed, the clear injustice of it is revealed and most people will reject it.

This is Abortion



6 weeks



7 weeks



10 weeks



11 weeks