

PassionLife

4

QUESTIONS LEADERS GUIDE



▶ Participant Worksheet Included

4 Questions Training Leader Guide

Answering the Crisis of Abortion with the Gospel of Life

The following guide works well for presenting the 4 Questions in a logical, easy to follow way. A worksheet is also included for your participants to take notes. Typically, about 40 minutes for each question is sufficient; more if discussion questions are used.

You are building a case for life and a call to action. The essential theological and ethical building blocks are listed under each question. Brief textual and interpretive notes are included. Focus on the 3-4 building blocks listed rather than all the biblical texts and comments in the 10-page 4 Questions document. That document is designed as a supplement and as a “stand-alone” resource for sharing the gospel of life with others. Emphasize throughout: “hear the word, obey the word, and share the word with others.”

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

Focus your teaching and discussion on Genesis 1:26-28, Luke 1: 34-44, Psalm 139:13-16. These texts provide a brief but accurate theology of human value, even in the womb.

1. **Genesis 1:26-28:** Every human life is endowed with a profound dignity and destiny.
 - a. A Christian view of human value is grounded in this: mankind created by God in the image of God. From these verses, we affirm that every human being is created with intrinsic value, equal value, exceptional value, and eternal value. What we call *natural rights* flow from these values. They are called natural rights because they are given by God, not by government.
 - b. Genesis 1:28 is the cultural (creative) mandate. Bearing children and raising families are commended by God as a sign of divine favor and enrichment. A critical discussion is needed to consider how contrarian the biblical view of children and family are to our modern sensibilities and attitudes.
2. **Luke 1: 34-44:** Answers the question, what is the unborn? When does human life begin? Help participants observe:
 - a. *“Conceive and give birth to a son” (Luke 1:31) and “conceive a son” (Luke 1:36)*
When did Jesus and John become sons, (male human beings)? The biblical answer is “at conception.”
 - b. *The Greek word “baby” (brephos) is the same in Luke 1:44 and in Luke 2:12*
Luke 1:44 refers to the unborn child; Luke 2:12 refers to the newborn child. In the biblical worldview, a child is a child, no matter its size, location, level of maturity, or degree of dependence.
 - c. *When the pregnant Mary meets the pregnant Elizabeth*
John the Baptist is 6 months old in the womb (Luke 1:36). John is slightly larger than your hand at this point. Ask, how old (big) is the unborn Jesus at this moment? You can deduce the

answer from a careful reading of the text. Mary is not pregnant when the angel comes to her. When she arrives at Elizabeth's home she is pregnant.

- i. Mary is said to travel "with haste" (1:39) approximately 95 miles (150 km) from Nazareth (1:26) to "the hill country of Judah" (1:39), an imprecise designation, but near Jerusalem, where Zachariah served as a priest at the temple (1:8). This is probably 3-5 days. Let's allow a week.
 - ii. Either way, the unborn child, John, announces with joy to his mother, "the Lord has come!" as he will to all people 30 years later. Jesus is a "zygote," just a few days or a week old—no bigger than the period at the end of this sentence and perhaps not yet implanted in the womb. Yet Christian doctrine teaches that he is fully divine and *fully human*.
3. **Psalm 139:13-16:** Life in the womb is grounds for praise and worship of God. David's use of the personal pronouns "I" and "me" show that he sees that he is the same human at the time of his writing as he was in the womb. Use this text to show that our humanity in the womb is not just true, it's delightfully and wondrously so.

Science *affirms* what the Bible teaches:

1. At conception, you are:
 - a. a living,
 - b. distinct,
 - c. and whole human being that develops from within through natural stages of maturation.
2. Show the EHD video of fetal science (app available at EHD.org)

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

Like us, God protects most what he loves most. God protects human life chiefly through his moral laws and by creating all people with conscience regarding those laws. This moral law, the sum of biblical ethics, can be stated in five words: "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18).

Inherent in this positive call to cherish and protect your neighbor's wellbeing is the negative law stated in Exodus 20:13, "Do not murder." Murder is the *intentional* killing of an *innocent* human being.

Together, faithfulness to biblical ethics means we do not intentionally kill human beings, nor do we acquiesce to the killing of innocent people by others. Indeed, we *love* them and do for them what we would want others to do for us if we were targeted for death.

Observe this biblical ethic in these passages: Genesis 4:8-11, Deuteronomy 21:1-9, Leviticus 20:2-5.

1. **Genesis 4:8-11:** Answers the question, how does God react to the shedding of innocent blood? Cain intentionally killed his innocent brother. Though the positive and negative commands have not yet been given, they are natural laws (written on Cain's conscience). He knows the negative command and so hides his actions by lying. He tries to shirk the positive command, saying, "Am I my brother's

keeper?" Yes, he is. Abel's life-blood cried out to God for vindication (Genesis 4:8-11). Abel knows his lifeblood is precious. God's reaction is judgment.

2. **Deuteronomy 21:1-9:** Answers the question, how should God's people react to the shedding of innocent blood? Show how God's appointed leaders are called to *lead* the people to grasp the preeminent moral crisis that is the shedding of innocent blood.
 - a. Vs. 2: Measuring establishes jurisdiction. The "closer you are the more responsible you are" is another iteration of "love your *neighbor*."
 - b. Vs. 3-4: The costly ritual provides a way for people to feel—to register the moral offense. They feel, in their economic loss and solemn assembly, what they cannot feel *emotionally* in the loss of human life. He was a stranger to them, and they are tempted to think, "It doesn't affect me." But he was not a stranger to God. Nor does his murder leave them unaffected. It will harden their hearts.
 - c. Vs. 7-9: The whole community must pray, reaffirming the positive and negative law as a heartfelt commitment. Even so, the people are stained with bloodguilt that needs atonement, though they did not murder the man or watch it happen.
3. **Leviticus 20:2-5:** Answers the question of God's view of child-killing.

To murder a child, or to allow it to happen, is an abomination and an offense to God. The most offensive form of child-killing is child sacrifice. God calls it an "unthinkable" evil in Jeremiah 32:35. Yet ritual child sacrifice, where the baby's throat was cut, is more humane than abortion, in which the baby is killed slowly, cut piece by piece. Child-sacrifice was done to ward off some problem or to secure some benefit. Today, we have removed the deity-appeasing dimensions of ancient child-sacrifice. But abortion is child-sacrifice done to avoid a problem or because we want something else instead (save expenses, college degree, etc.)

Show the pictures or video of abortion. Provide a time of prayer, grieving and testimony.

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

The human experience of God's grace is found in receiving God's forgiveness and in experiencing a cleansed conscience. In this we have peace with God and our secret shame and regret is turned into an open and joyful testimony of God's mercy in our life through Christ. This transformational experience may be sudden or slow, but always involves faith.

Read and discuss Psalm 32:1-5, Isaiah 53:4-6, Hebrews 9:14.

1. **Psalm 32:1-5:** Faith in the form of confession and repentance.

How do we experience guilt? We tend to conceal it (cover it). But our silence (vs. 3) corrodes our strength. Guilt feels heavy. Grief, shame, and regret feel hot (vs. 4). Uncover, or confess your sin, (vs. 5) and God can do a forgiving and freeing good work in your life. Blessed, (happy and free) is the person who journeys from guilt to grace (vs. 1).

- Isaiah 53: 4-6:** Faith in the form of trusting in Christ and his cross.
Answers the question, on what basis can God forgive me? It is unjust to acquit the guilty or condemn the innocent. This text explains how God can remain just while showing mercy. God provides a substitutionary punishment for all our sins, so that his justice is upheld even as his mercy is extended. On the cross, Christ justifies his forgiveness for those who repent and trust in God's provision for sin. In the context of abortion Christ shed his innocent blood on the cross to cover over (atone) our guilt for shedding innocent blood or doing nothing to stop it. To trust in Christ means to believe two things: that Christ suffered the penalty due for all your sins and that he suffered the full punishment due for each one of them. That's "good news!"
- Hebrews 9:14:** Faith in the form of endurance and fighting for a clean conscience.
Seeing and being satisfied in Christ's provision and returning and reminding ourselves of it as need be is the only pathway to freedom from guilt and healing from the pain of past choices. God wants us to trust in his complete atonement and so freely serve him. You know when you have experienced this freedom when you can turn your secret shame and silence into testimony and praise. For example: Download, Jeannie Pernia's testimony *Conquered by Grace*, at www.passionlife.org.

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

Read and discuss: Proverbs 24:10-12, Luke 10:25-37.

- Proverbs 24:10-12:** The call to rescue.
Biblical ethics regarding innocent human life can be summarized in one word: *rescue*. Rescuing the innocent is the Golden Rule in action. Inherent in this call are the previous calls to 1. Not shed innocent blood or 2. Close your eyes to it. Show that the context of 24:11 is "slaughter" (the intentional killing of innocent people). The call is to take proactive steps to rescue the innocent. Our initial response will be to avoid the inherent danger or cost involved by denying knowledge of the evil (24:12). But the antidote to fear is moral courage that arises from faith that God "keeps watch" over our life. How we react to the slaughter of innocents, what we do, reveals the presence (absence) of faith in God for our lives.
- Luke 10:25-37:** The paradigm for intervention work.
The Samaritan story tells us *how* to rescue. It serves as a paradigm for direct, practical, personal intervention, that costs time and treasure, but saves lives and glorifies God. Follow the Samaritan. To put it another way, follow the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12). The Golden Rule is another expression of biblical ethics; the law of love.

Look at the many examples provided in the 4 Questions Training on how God's people rescued the innocent in the past. Over 4,000 pregnancy help ministries have been organized in the last 40 years as a Christian response to legal abortion.

Training Worksheet

Answering the Crisis of Abortion with the Gospel of Life

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

Genesis 1:26-28: Answers the questions, what makes human life valuable and in what ways do we speak of that value?

The cultural (creative) mandate: vs. 1:28. Children are commended by God as a sign of divine favor and enrichment. How contrarian is the biblical view of children and family to our modern sensibilities and attitudes?

Luke 1:34-44: Answers the question, what is the unborn? Or when does human life begin?

Science affirms what the Bible teaches: "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.

At conception, you are: 1) living, 2) distinct, and 3) a whole human being that develops from within through natural stages of maturation.

Psalms 139:13-16: Life in the womb as grounds for praise and worship of God.

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

Like us, God protects most what he loves most:

God protects human life chiefly through his moral laws and by creating people with conscience regarding those laws.

Exodus 20:13: God's protective law of love stated negatively.

Leviticus 19:18: God's protective law of love stated positively.

We can see these ethical laws working together in the following:

Genesis 4:8-11: Answers the question, how does God react to the shedding of innocent blood?

Deuteronomy 21:1-9: Answers the question, how should God's people react to the shedding of innocent blood?

Leviticus 20:2-5: Answers the question of God's view of child-killing and child-sacrifice.

If the unborn are human, then abortion is the intentional killing of an innocent child; modern child-sacrifice.

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

Psalms 32:1-5: Answers the question, how do we typically experience guilt and shame? It also points to the importance of confession and repentance.

Isaiah 53:4-6: Answers the question, on what basis can God forgive me? It also points to the importance of trusting in Christ and his cross.

Hebrews 9:14: Answers the questions of ongoing shame and regret and the importance of fighting for a clean conscience and the freedom to serve God.

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

Proverbs 24:10-12: All that God calls us to do can be summarized in one word: *rescue*.

Luke 10:25-37: The Samaritan story shows us how to rescue, providing a paradigm for intervention work.

Think about the examples provided of God's people rescuing the innocent throughout history.
How did they do so? Discuss their methods.

How are Christians doing pregnancy crisis intervention today?

How is it or might it be done in your community?