

Pro-Choice



or Pro-Life?

EXAMINING 15 PRO-CHOICE CLAIMS

What do facts & common sense tell us?

Discussion Guide

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INTRODUCTION

Why talk about abortion?

1. What is your position on abortion? Why do you think you have that position? Take some time to carefully think through your answer.

2. Randy gives some examples of those who are pro-life and still value choice in many areas, and those who are pro-choice and of course value life in many areas. What are some things you are “pro-choice” about? What are some things you are “anti-choice” about?

3. How could finding common ground with those of differing viewpoints help our dialogues about abortion?

4. Have you had your position about abortion mischaracterized by someone, either in a personal conversation or online? What happened?

5. How difficult do you find talking with others about abortion? How can we encourage respect and empathy when we're talking with those we disagree with on such a consequential issue?

PRO-CHOICE CLAIM #1

“The embryo isn’t a baby—it’s just a product of conception and a potential life.”

1. What is the most common definition you’ve heard of when life begins? Do you agree/disagree? Why?

2. Were you aware of the facts of what happens early in a pregnancy? Which fact about fetal development most surprised you?

3. After reading or hearing about the development of an unborn baby, do you think it would be harder or easier for someone to decide to have an abortion? Why?

4. Why do you think people sometimes describe the pre-born as a “blob of tissue,” “clump of cells,” or “product of conception”?

5. What do “baby on board” t-shirts and gender reveal parties tell us about our culture’s confusion when it comes to the preborn?

PRO-CHOICE CLAIM #2

“Well, the fetus may be human,
but it isn’t a person.”

1. What do you think about the ethicists’ suggestion that doctors should be allowed to abort newborn babies because they’re “not persons”? How does this make you feel? Why?

2. What are some examples from history of how one group of people’s definition of personhood has been used to abuse and oppress other groups of people?

3. Why do you think people feel so differently about killing a baby after birth than before (especially since some children are delivered at six months of development and others are aborted at eight months)?

4. Why is viability a poor gauge for personhood? Why is defining personhood using standards of age, size, IQ, location, or stage of development also problematic?

5. How would you define personhood? What is your definition based on?

PRO-CHOICE CLAIM #3

“Even if a fetus is a person, no person is allowed to live off the body of another person without permission.”

1. Is the fact that some people see the preborn as “parasites” problematic to our society? Why or why not? What are the possible implications of such a view?
2. How is the analogy of the violinist an effective emotional device? How does it fail to reflect reality?
3. Randy writes, “Don’t we recognize there is moral responsibility toward saving a life, even if it involves an inconvenience or risk we didn’t ask for or want?” Do you agree? Why or why not?
4. Does it make a difference to remember that each of us was once helpless and completely dependent on our own mothers for life? (Even months and years after we were born?) How should that knowledge impact the way we think about the preborn?
5. What do you think needs to change in our society so we see the preborn not as parasites but as helpless children?

PRO-CHOICE CLAIM #4

“A woman has a right to control her own body, and no one should tell her what she can or can’t do. It’s barbaric and unenlightened to force a woman to continue a pregnancy.”

1. What would the huge fallacy be if someone actually argued that “every man has the right to rape a woman if that’s his choice, and no one can tell him what he can or can’t do with his body”? How can this help us understand what pro-lifers say is the main problem with abortion?

2. What other kinds of laws can you think of that limit people’s choices, in a good way? What would the consequences be if our culture were pro-choice about all matters that involve the welfare of other people?

3. Why would some people say that forcing a woman to continue her pregnancy is barbaric? Why would others say that ending the life of her preborn child is barbaric? How should we decide what’s truly barbaric and primitive?

4. Why is it important to understand that from a scientific standpoint, the preborn is not a part of her mother’s body?

5. Why is thinking of someone as a “nonperson” due to age or size or anything else problematic for our society? Is it even more frightening to acknowledge someone is a person but to believe if they are unwanted by another person they have no right to live?

PRO-CHOICE CLAIM #5

“It’s necessary to be pro-choice in order to protect women’s rights. Those, especially men, who push their pro-life convictions on others are anti-women.”

1. Do we have to approve of and even advance abortion in order to support women’s rights? Why or why not? How can those who oppose abortion separate it from women’s rights and still make clear they are pro-women?

2. Before reading this chapter, did you know that abortion is used to eliminate vast numbers of females around the world? Is this something that women’s rights advocates (and everyone else) should be concerned about? Why or why not?

3. Have you ever heard of the many possible physical complications of an abortion? Why do you think these risks aren’t usually spoken of? How could knowledge of these risks change people’s views on abortion?

4. Why do you think abortion affects so many women (and men) psychologically? Why are women not informed about this before abortions happen? What effect does this have on our society and in our families?

5. What kind of mixed messages do men hear about their responsibility as a father and yet also the convenience of abortion? How does abortion “bring out the worst in men”?

PRO-CHOICE CLAIM #6

“Opposition to abortion is just a religious opinion.”

1. Have you ever thought about abortion as a human rights issue or civil rights issue *for the preborn*? How could this change the abortion debate?

2. Does it surprise you to learn there are secular and atheist pro-life groups? Why or why not?

3. If you were asked to present the pro-life position without referencing the Bible or God, what would you say?

PRO-CHOICE CLAIM #7

“We need abortion in cases of rape or incest, or risk to the mother’s life.”

1. Why do you think pro-choice advocates and politicians often use the example of rape when discussing abortion rights?

2. Randy asked readers to think about how they would feel if they suddenly found out a friend or a family member was fathered by a rapist. Would such a revelation change your view of your loved one? Why or why not?

3. What do the violence of rape and the violence of abortion have in common?

4. Did it surprise you to learn Dr. Hamada's claim that there are no maternal conditions that require third-term abortion, just delivery? How would this understanding change the late-term abortion debate?

5. Randy shared a story about friends who faced fast-spreading uterine cancer and chose a surgical treatment that resulted in their preborn child's death. How is a procedure like this different than an abortion? How can we show compassion to women in similar situations?

PRO-CHOICE CLAIM #8

“Every child should be a wanted child.”

1. How would you finish this sentence? “Every child should be a wanted child, so...”

2. What would you tell someone who says, “I can't have this baby because I can't give it a good life”? What is implied by the use of the word baby?

3. Were you surprised to learn that child abuse has risen significantly since the legalization of abortion? How is viewing abortion as a means of preventing child abuse illogical?

4. Do you think abortion has changed our society's view of children? Why or why not?

PRO-CHOICE CLAIM #9

“Forcing a woman to keep a child she can't afford to raise and who will limit her opportunities in life—or to give up a child for adoption—is cruel.”

1. For what very real reasons might a woman feel that abortion is her only choice? What are some ways we can lovingly help women address those reasons?

2. Does abortion really solve a woman's problems? Why or why not?

3. Why is abortion not “an enriching experience”?

4. How can adoption be a better option for women facing an unwanted pregnancy than abortion? What are some ways we can change the negative perception that some people have of adoption?

5. Imagine you are talking with a woman facing an unplanned pregnancy who can't keep her child. How would you gently help her understand that the question isn't, "How can I give my baby up for adoption?" but "How could I kill my baby by abortion?"

PRO-CHOICE CLAIM #10

"No one should be made to carry, deliver, and care for a disabled child with lifelong needs, nor should a child be condemned to a lifetime of suffering."

1. How would you define a "meaningful" or "fulfilling" life?

2. If you asked a disabled person if they wish their parents would have aborted them, what response would you expect?

3. Professor Peter Singer says an individual's human worth is based on his/her usefulness to others. How does this logic carry over to already born children, the elderly, the disabled, and the sick?

4. A real life situation: Your friend is pregnant. She's told by her doctor, "Tests show the fetus has a disease that causes deformity. It will probably live no more than a few weeks after birth, and if it does, it will never be able to walk, talk, see, or have a normal life. It's your choice, of course, but I recommend you terminate the pregnancy." What would you tell your friend?

5. Randy writes, “The quality of a society is largely defined by how it treats its weakest members.” In light of this, how would you define our society?

PRO-CHOICE CLAIM #11

“The world is overpopulated, so the fewer births the better.”

1. How would you respond if someone seriously proposed killing immigrants or those over 65 as a means of population reduction? What is suggested by the fact that many people understandably reject these terrible ideas but accept that abortion is a legitimate way of reducing our population?

2. Have you ever considered that abortion has wiped out millions of people who would otherwise be part of our society? What are some of the implications of having those people missing?

3. What do abortion and euthanasia have in common?

PRO-CHOICE CLAIM #12

“If abortion were made illegal, women would again die from unsafe abortions.”

1. How can laws change hearts and minds over time? Give some examples from history.

2. Does it matter that the statistics that NARAL used about maternal deaths before abortion was legalized were fabricated? Why or why not?

3. Why do you think that maternal deaths and injuries from legal abortion are often hidden and not well reported or publicized?

4. What would you say to someone who actually argued, “Child abuse happens anyway, so we might as well make it legal”? How does your response also apply to the abortion issue?

PRO-CHOICE CLAIM #13

“The world is overpopulated, so the fewer births the better.”

1. Why might someone prefer to be called “pro-choice” instead of “pro-abortion”?

2. How is the slogan “Against abortion? Don’t have one” illogical or misleading when it comes to issues such as rape, child abuse, or murder?

3. What is the main reason for being personally opposed to abortion? What might be some secondary reasons?

4. What is the problem with the statement, “I’m personally opposed to slavery, but I support the rights of other men to own slaves”? How does your response also apply to the abortion issue?

PRO-CHOICE CLAIM #14

“Pro-life proponents are pro-birth, not pro-life. They only care about fetuses and do nothing to help children who are already born, as evidenced by how they vote.”

1. What should the term “pro-life” encompass? Should it ever exclude the preborn? Why or why not?

2. What are the main criticisms you hear about those who are pro-life? Do you think those criticisms have some basis in reality?

3. How would you respond to someone who says that pro-lifers don’t care about women or babies once they’re born? What evidence exists to the contrary? How should pro-lifers be encouraged to do more to care for them?

4. What is the problem with saying someone’s care for women and children is evidenced by their support or rejection of a certain government program or political idea?

5. How would you answer the challenging question in this chapter: “What kind of government policy or program can address the plight of women facing unsupported pregnancy without supporting abortion?”

PRO-CHOICE CLAIM #15

“The Bible doesn’t say anything against abortion,
and many Christians believe it’s acceptable.”

1. Have you heard any passages of Scripture used to claim that the Bible supports abortion? If so, which ones?

2. Read Psalm 139. What evidences do you find of God’s care for the preborn?

3. Did it surprise you to learn that the Hebrew word used in the Old Testament to refer to the preborn is also used to refer to children and young adults? What does this tell you about God’s heart for children of all ages?

4. How does understanding God’s prerogatives over life and death help us address the difficult issue of miscarriage and why it is in no way a support for human-caused abortion?

5. Were you aware of how ancient and consistent the beliefs of Christians have been that abortion is wrong because it kills a child? Does this influence your thinking at all?

6. The Bible tells us to love others and show them compassion (1 Peter 3:8) and not to condemn others by judging them (Luke 6:37). But it also tells us to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:25) and speak up for the defenseless (Proverbs 31:8). How do we balance these commands when we're discussing abortion, especially with someone who is considering having an abortion?

CONCLUSION

“How can I help save women and children from abortion?”

1. How have your thoughts and feelings about abortion been challenged or even changed over the course of reading this book?

2. Take a few minutes and view some 3D ultrasound images at www.prenatalpeek.com/3dultrasoundphotos. (To see an intrauterine video of children at various levels of development, see www.ehd.org/your-life-before-birth-video.) How do these photos and videos make you feel? How do they call you to action?

3. How do we show love and compassion to women who are thinking about getting an abortion? How does understanding that abortion harms women, not just children, influence how you talk with those facing an unplanned pregnancy?

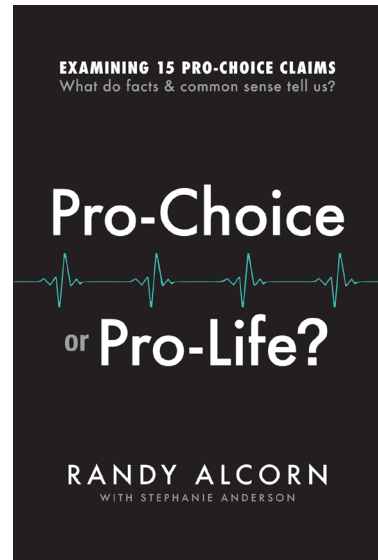
4. How should we respond to and care for others who've had an abortion? How does God view them and respond to them?

5. Read Proverbs 24:11, 12. What is God calling you to do in response to His Word and this book? How are you going to choose to make a difference? (See www.epm.org/helpunborn for ideas.)

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