

Holding Mothers Accountable Means Respecting Them and Treating Them with Dignity

Key point: We must stop insulting abortive women by implying they were incapable of carrying their babies to term, that they no other alternative but to kill their preborn children.

Numerous groups that claim to be “pro-life” are seeking to thwart any and all efforts to hold any abortive mother legally accountable for aborting her child or children. In this post, I will make the case that the law *must* allow for penalties for abortive women. This is not to say that every abortion case necessarily should result in a penalty or penalties for the mother. It is to say that eliminating from our laws *in wholesale fashion* the legal responsibility of mothers for killing their unborn babies has had and will have devastating consequences for society, both culturally and nationally.

Consider these nine realities.

First, numerous legislative efforts to protect unborn children have been strongly resisted by a great many so-called “pro-life” groups. In May of 2022, leaders of a host of organizations claiming to exist to protect unborn children signed a letter (<https://t.ly/5nY48>) “To all State Legislators in the United States of America” expressing strong opposition to holding women legally accountable for aborting their children. Yet the proposed Louisiana legislation that prompted the letter — the Abolition of Abortion Act (Louisiana HB 813) would simply have afforded unborn children the same legal protections that belong to people already born. Capstone Report described (<https://t.ly/mR9Cl>) the situation this way:

The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) of the Southern Baptist Convention [one of the organizations represented in the letter’s many signatories] is under fire for fighting a Pro-Life Bill in Louisiana. The ERLC joined a letter with other national pro-life groups resisting the legislation in Louisiana that would have provided Equal Protection to the unborn baby and a post-birth baby. And Southern Baptists were not happy with it—especially as this action directly contradicted the Abortion Abolition resolution (<https://t.ly/ITCjA>) adopted at last year’s Southern Baptist Convention’s Annual Meeting [on June 21, 2021].

I’m prompted to ask, *What is the end game here for these “pro-life” groups? Is it to make abortion illegal, to finally put a stop to abortion altogether? If so, then how do*

they plan to accomplish this without extending the same legal protections to unborn children that already protect men, women, boys, and girls?

Second, the idea that mothers must not be held legally accountable for ending innocent lives through abortion undermines the argument that a pregnant woman ought not to abort her baby because the baby's body isn't her own body. Conversely, this idea adds credence to the pro-choice argument that "a woman ought to be able to decide to abort her baby because she can do what she wants with her own body." Here's the truth: A woman certainly can make health decisions about her own body — but the baby inside her has a body of his or her own. *That* body *does not* belong to the mother! Neither she nor anyone else is talking just about her own health anymore, but about someone else, and someone else's life.

Third, it's true that many women who've had abortions are victims. Abortion kills children *and* exploits women. But being a victim does not give anyone an excuse to kill another human being. Moreover, not all women who've aborted their children or otherwise been involved with abortion are victims. Do you believe these (<https://t.ly/fFYQV>) women are? Consider these statistics (<https://t.ly/r4Ukt>) from the Charlotte Lozier Institute:

1. 0.4 percent of abortions occur as a result of rape or incest
2. 0.3 percent because of a [perceived] risk to the woman's life or major bodily function
3. 2.2 percent occur due to other physical health concerns [*health* often is very broadly understood and defined]
4. 1.2 percent occur because of abnormality in the unborn baby
5. 95.9 percent take place for elective and unspecified reasons

To item #2, I have added the word *perceived* because the idea that an abortion may sometimes be necessary to save the life of the mother has been thoroughly refuted. Watch this video: (<https://t.ly/a9fYZ>).

The point here is that the whopping number of abortions that occur for "elective and unspecified reasons" — or, perhaps more accurately stated in a great many cases, for the mother's convenience — reflects a callous attitude toward human life that is detrimental to both individuals and society. Especially when such an attitude is overwhelmingly evident, shouldn't *that* be enough to hold a woman accountable for ending the life of her child through abortion?

Fourth, pro-choice advocates distort beyond recognition the meaning of the terms *right* and *rights*. The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution speak of rights, but the rights of which these documents speak are inherent, God-given rights — rights that belong to every human being by virtue of having been *created by God* in His image. As you are aware, the right to life is even named specifically in the Declaration (<https://t.ly/KNACR>).

Moreover,

- these rights are inextricably linked to God's laws.
- Government does not, and cannot, grant them but
- has a duty to recognize, maintain, and protect them. See items 5, 7, and 8 on this list (<https://t.ly/eoYzg>) and explore them at (<https://t.ly/1G3kY>).

Who can argue with *any* credibility that *any* person has a God-given right to take an innocent human life, or to participate in the taking of an innocent human life? God has declared human life to be sacred (see Gen. 1:26-28; 9:6; Ex. 20:13; Deut. 5:17; Ps. 139:13-16 — <https://t.ly/15uDD>). Any so-called “right” to abortion isn't a right authorized by the Constitution at all, but one created by government in blatant disobedience to God and His laws.

Fifth, the idea that a woman should not in any way be held responsible for an abortion she chooses to have reinforces the tenets of situation ethics and attempts to undermine the biblical teaching that right and wrong are absolute — applicable to all people, at all times under all circumstances. See items 1 and 2 this list (<https://t.ly/eoYzg>) and explore them at <https://t.ly/ymBvW>.

We should emphasize at this point that quite often, men who are involved in the lives of women who have abortions are responsible to some degree, and in some cases to a great degree, for the abortions that occur. The father of a child recently conceived very well may pressure the mother to have an abortion, make arrangements for an abortion to occur, pay for the abortion, or in some other way make an abortion possible or likely. Just so no one misunderstands, I believe our laws should protect unborn children from *anyone*, male or female, who might take their lives. We can put it another way. Men who are parties to abortion also have blood on their hands. Their actions contribute to the deaths of innocent children, and they also should be held liable.

That said, it is undeniable that the mother's say about the matter usually (though not always) is the final word. Abortionists certainly should be held responsible for their actions. So should mothers, as we have said — *and* the men involved. Yet we need to recognize this reality: If the mothers aren't held accountable for abortion, the men won't be, either. The realities that

1. only women can get pregnant and that
2. only women can have abortions

make the debate, at least initially, about whether or not unborn children should be legally protected from losing their lives at the hands of their *mothers*. The mother's responsibility, therefore, is the primary focus of this article.

Sixth, exempting women who are guilty of taking their unborn babies' lives through abortion from penalty or punishment ignores and even repudiates the natural instinct of mothers to protect their babies. King Solomon of Israel wisely tapped into a mother's natural instinct to protect her child when he rendered a judgment between two women, both of whom claimed to be the mother of a surviving child (see 1 Kings 3:16-28 — <https://t.ly/OAX7g>). Just as did Solomon's wise judgment, and just as do ultrasounds (<https://t.ly/njGOp>) in our day, our *laws* need to tap into this natural maternal instinct. Yet this will never happen if we refuse to hold women morally accountable for how they treat their children, especially with regard to whether or not they allow them to live.

But wait! someone will say. *Isn't it unduly harsh to punish a mother for aborting her child when she feels she has no alternative?* No, it isn't. Why? *Because she does have alternatives, alternatives that do not involve the taking of an innocent life* (<https://t.ly/U2RPC>). Furthermore, we must remember that we've been talking about actions that fully constitute premeditated murder. Again we must ask, *Since when does being a victim give anyone the right to take an innocent human life?*

I also would point out that Solomon's recommendation seemed overly harsh at first, but in the end, it was life-saving and just. The same can be said about holding people, including mothers, accountable for violating the rights of unborn babies. In the end, the effect of any just law is going to be to be life-saving or life-affirming.

Seventh, ending abortion means no longer having the issue of fighting abortion as a cause. People who pride themselves on being members of the pro-life community will cringe over this idea and object to it strenuously. Even so, it is apparent that the loss of their cause would be painful to many. Such a loss looms as a threat to them because they've done what they've done for so long, they don't know how to operate and effectively be advocates for life in a world where abortions are illegal. I say to them: *Learn how! Even when abortion becomes illegal, the need to advocate for life still will be as great, or even greater, than ever.*

The Kendrick Brothers movie *Lifemark* is highly recommended and is available on YouTube at <https://t.ly/8YwLC>.

Eighth, failing to hold women accountable for taking the lives of their preborn babies is an insult to all women in general and to mothers in particular. Many "pro-life" groups, however, aren't just failing in this regard, they are *intentionally shielding* women who would kill their babies through abortion from legal consequences that ought to at least be a possibility when the rights of innocent human beings have been violated. Attempts to protect women in this way says to them, *"We know you're incapable of refraining from having an abortion; you're totally unable to stop yourself from murdering your*

child. Your circumstances, whatever they are, are so difficult you're unable to rise above them. Therefore, we oppose any penalties the law might bring against you for arranging an abortion and submitting to one."

This approach treats women as less than human! It demeans them by sending the message they're not capable of refraining from murder! Yet they *are*! Why? Because they are human beings and not animals. Contrary to the strong feelings they may be experiencing at the onset and during an unwanted pregnancy, they are *not* hard-wired to follow their base desires and raw instincts!

Ninth, the truth matters, and the truth is that the unborn are human and are people of infinite worth. Pro-life advocate Scott Klusendorf puts it this way (<https://t.ly/5IEWj>).

The morality of abortion comes down to just one question: Is the unborn a member of the human family? If so, elective abortion is a serious moral wrong that violates biblical commands against the unjust taking of human life (Exod. 23:7; Ps. 106:37–38; Prov. 6:16–17; Matt. 5:21 — <https://t.ly/4sDV9>). It treats the unborn human being, made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26; 9:6; James 3:9 <https://t.ly/5x1Nh>), as nothing more than disposable tissue. Conversely, if the unborn are not human, elective abortion requires no more justification than having a tooth pulled.

If the unborn aren't human, there's no justifiable reason to be pro-life in the first place. *But they are!* Every human being, every human life, is infinitely valuable and has an inherent, God-given right to life.

As we indicated earlier, God has made each person in His own image, whether born or pre-born. Each one of us is "fearfully and wonderfully made" (see Gen. 1:26-28; 9:6; Ps. 139:13-16 — <https://t.ly/epTYQ>); and inherently, each of us possesses a God-given life and a God-given right to live it and to "pursue happiness" under "the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God" (see item 3 on this list (<https://t.ly/eoYzg>) and explore it at <https://t.ly/ymBvW>).

Let's reiterate. Every pre-born individual is a person that the government and its laws should, and indeed must, protect, even from harm or potential harm from his or her own mother.

Otherwise, abortion won't ever end.

It's that simple, and it's that serious.

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