

Hard Cases and Abortion

by Sebastian R Fama

In an effort to win support for legalized abortion, its advocates will point to the hard cases. The idea is that anyone who would deny an abortion to a woman in difficult circumstances is cruel and uncaring. But pro-lifers understand that if you care about someone you tell them the truth.

The long-term effects of abortion on women are well documented and can be attested to by the women themselves. Long-term effects can include bladder injuries, bowel injuries, severe rapid bleeding, sterility, and a negative effect on future pregnancies. It can also have a profoundly negative effect on a woman's mental health, regardless of how the baby was conceived.

The effects on the baby are devastating as well. All abortions result in a dead baby, but most procedures involve tortuous pain. In an article written for *The Federalist* dealing with fetal pain, Robin Pierucci, a neonatologist, wrote the following: "In the neonatal intensive care unit, I see premature babies at the edge of viability (23-24 weeks' gestation) react to painful or uncomfortable procedures every day. For example, when you poke them for blood work, the babies wrinkle up their faces, kick their feet, clench their hands into tiny fists, curl their toes, arch their backs and try to wriggle away, or smack at the offending person."ⁱ

Fetal pain can be experienced even earlier, as noted in an article entitled "Fetal Pain is a Reason to end Abortion." The author quoted an abortionist who described a preborn baby fighting for his life during a saline injection. According to the abortionist: "All of a sudden one noticed that at the time of the saline infusion there was a lot of activity in the uterus.... That's obviously the fetus being distressed by swallowing the concentrated salt solution and kicking violently and that's, to all intents and purposes, the death trauma."ⁱⁱ

Can such a brutal act ever be justified?

Battling Justifications

I was recently challenged with a few cases that involved difficult circumstances. I was then asked if I would still be pro-life if I had to deal with them. Let's see if they make a difference.

1. Your wife is told by the doctor that her pregnancy is not viable; her baby has no kidneys or brain and will most likely die before birth.

Any difficult situation needs to be dealt with compassionately, but true compassion must be rooted in reality. Quick and easy choices are not always the best ones. Before Noah Wall was born, his parents were told that he didn't have a brain. They were advised five times to abort him, and five times they refused. Noah's parents were told that he had very little chance of survival and that, if he did survive, he would be unable to talk, see, hear, or eat. But this amazing six-year-old can now do all of those things! Noah defied the odds by growing a brain. When he was born, he had about 2% of his brain. With the help of a radical brain training center, his brain has grown to 80%.ⁱⁱⁱ

Congresswoman Jaime Herrera Beutler had a similar experience when she and her husband were told their preborn daughter had no kidneys and would be "incompatible with life." They sought help, and the press picked up on the couple's struggle. A man named Rob Volmer stumbled upon the story. It struck him because he and his wife had been through a similar situation with their preborn son, whose life was saved by infusions of saline into his wife's uterus. Rob felt compelled to contact Jaime and put her in touch with the doctor that helped them.^{iv}

Jaime received the treatments, and her daughter Abigail began to develop normally. Abigail was born prematurely and weighed only 2 lbs. 12 oz. She went on dialysis until she was old enough to receive a kidney transplant from her father. Abigail is now a happy and healthy child.

There are certainly no guarantees that every situation will end this happily, but every human being deserves a chance at life.

2. The doctor tells you that your wife and baby will most likely die if the pregnancy is brought to term.

In this case, we have two patients not one, and the answer is simple. The American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists articulates it this way:

When extreme medical emergencies that threaten the life of the mother arise ...AAPLOG believes in "treatment to save the mother's life," including premature delivery if that is indicated – obviously with the patients informed consent. This is NOT "abortion to save the mother's life." We are treating two patients, the mother and the baby, and every reasonable attempt to save the baby's life would also be a part of our medical intervention.^v

Abortion providers work very hard at dehumanizing babies in the womb because they profit greatly from it. Both mom and baby deserve to live.

3. You're pro-life until your daughter is raped. She becomes pregnant and dies at home in a failed attempt to abort her child.

All rape victims should receive help and support, and that help should include sound guidance. Suggesting another act of violence – which is what an abortion is – can create numerous long-term problems. There is no magic wand that can make the pain go away. Recovery can be difficult, but we still have an obligation to care for the baby. The rapist is the criminal, not the baby.

4. A woman should be able to decide on her own, as only she alone has to deal with this decision.

In truth, the woman is not the only one who has to deal with this decision. The baby and the father have to deal with it as well. As we noted earlier, an abortion causes a baby to suffer and die. And to write off the father is sexism in its purest form. A baby is a child of both the mother and the father.

There is something else we need to consider. A woman has a heart, a set of lungs, kidneys, and a host of other organs and body parts that serve to keep her healthy. In short, they are made for her. But her uterus falls into a different category. As pro-life advocate Stephanie Gray points out, a woman doesn't need it and can live without it. It's actually not made for her. Every month it prepares itself for a new life. So when a womb is inhabited by a new baby, that baby is on her own real estate.^{vi} Thus, I think it is more accurate to say that women haven't so much been given a uterus as they have been entrusted with one.

God is the author of all life. He has given us bodies that allow us help him create. To a lesser extent we do the same sort of thing when we allow a small child to help us bake a cake. We don't really need their help. However, because we love them, we let them be a part of the process. Likewise, God allows us to be a part of the process of creating new life. It would be wrong for us to destroy that which God has created.

So yes, still pro-life even when unique circumstances are involved.

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ⁱ Robin Pierucci, "Neonatologist: Babies Do Feel Pain in the Womb. I've Seen It," *The Federalist*, January 19, 2018, thefederalist.com/2018/01/29/neonatologist-babies-feel-pain-womb-ive-seen.

ⁱⁱ HLI Staff, "Fetal Pain is a Reason to End Abortion," October 6, 2021, hli.org/resources/fetal-pain-reason-end-abortion.

ⁱⁱⁱ Miranda Larbi, "The Boy with no brain," *The Sun*, February 20, 2019, thesun.co.uk/fabulous/8466742/bou-born-missing-brain-lives-grew-back.

^{iv} Mel Johnson, "Born with No kidneys, This Baby is a True Miracle," *God Updates*, April 24, 2016, godupdates.com/baby-born-with-no-kidneys-is-a-true-miracle.

^v "What is AAPLOG's Position on 'Abortion to Save the Life of the Mother'?" American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists, accessed March 21, 2023, aaplog.org/what-is-aaplogs-position-on-abortion-to-save-the-life-of-the-mother.

^{vi} *The 'Violinist' Argument*, YouTube accessed March 23, 2023, youtube.com/watch?v=RGpudL_GQ3Y.