Is God really "pro-life?"

by Brian Adrian

If the term "pro-life" was in the Bible, life would be a lot easier. Instead of interpreting Scripture to justify our position, we could simply read it to our adversaries and let them try to do the justifying. Let the burden of proof be on them. After all, God is pro-life.

Instead, "pro-life" is a term that was coined in contrast to "pro-choice" in the present day battle over abortion. Instead of the negative term "anti-abortion," it was deemed important as a tactic of moral debate to be positioned as "pro-" or for something rather than just being against or "anti-" in approach. We took the label "pro-life" to express our support for life in the womb.

But now, or so it seems, the term "pro-life" has taken on a life of its own with broader meaning and application than was ever intended. So now we need to consider if the term is still true in this new broader context, which includes such things as euthanasia, capital punishment and the hot debate over "justifiable homicide" in the execution-style shooting of abortionists.

Or has the "pro-life" label become a millstone around our necks, forcing us down an unscriptural path? We need to reconsider to see if God is still on our side and, more importantly, if we are still on His. If we've strayed away from His will, our "good works" may only be destined for the trash heap to be burned. His will, not ours, must be our goal.

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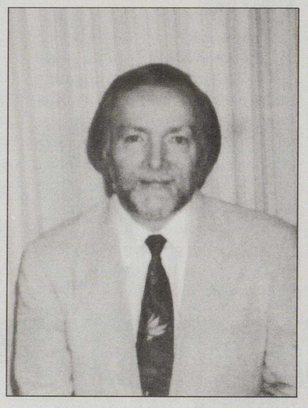

In order to learn if God really is pro-life in this new context, we should first talk about fundamentals. The question, however, is not whether life begins at conception but rather something even more basic. If we are to seriously pursue truth, we must first consider our whole view of life.

Just think back for a moment: Have you ever watched a sunrise and seen the sun start to come up, only to be pushed back down below the horizon by the overpowering strength of the night's darkness? Of course not! Well, just as the rising sun can never be turned back by the darkness, neither can God's plan for the end of this age be somehow reversed. And likewise, the brightness of the glory of His Son Jesus Christ can never be quenched for all eternity.

But even Satan can appear as an angel of light, whose workers deceitfully seem to represent righteousness (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). Even respected Christian ministers, entangled in a worldly perspective, can misunderstand God's plan (Matthew 16:22-23). And even God's Word can be rendered powerless by our clinging to unscriptural priorities, such as the traditions of men (Mark 7:6-13).

How can we detect such subtle dangers? We must somehow gain the ability to recognize the difference whether something (such as a tradition, teaching or some action) is or is not of God. This needed ability is called spiritual discernment and it can only be developed from a solid scriptural foundation, beginning with salvation. "For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11). Without Jesus we have nothing, but with Him we have access to all God has to offer.

The "baptism in the Holy Spirit" is an important step in this process. Even though many have been misled by false teaching on the subject, the facts remain that Jesus is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33), Jesus says we need this special empowerment (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:5,8) and Jesus says it is appropriate to ask the Father for this heavenly gift (Luke 11:13). It is the Holy Spirit who teaches us and guides us into all truth (John 16:13).

Now, with commitment to Jesus Christ and the help of the Holy Spirit, we are able to develop the ability we need to avoid the traps of deception, tradition and a worldly perspective. But there is one more key: we must take God seriously. By believing what He says and allowing that activated belief (also called "faith") to change us as we study and act on God's Word, we will learn and accept His perspective, making it our own.

(If we fail to take God seriously, unwilling to believe and accept all that He says, then our spiritual discernment will likewise fail to develop properly, leaving us spiritually vulnerable.)

As God's perspective continues to work changes in us, we can also expect to be ridiculed, criticized and worse, simply because our own perspective no longer conforms to the world. But have no fear! We can always trust in God's sovereignty to win out in the end. After all, sovereignty means that no matter who you are, you'll either accept God's perspective or you'll be wrong. End of discussion.

Now that we're equipped with at least the principles involved in spiritual discernment from God's perspective (also called a "God centered" or "Christ-centered world view"), let's go on to confront this "pro-life" question head-on by looking at what the Bible says about the so-called "sanctity of life."

The usual argument is that all human life is sacred because "God made man in His own image." Consequently, the taking of any human life is wrong. Not surprisingly, therefore, the idea of "killing in the name of life is rank hypocrisy, pure and simple, and in no way pro-life," as one Christian leader put it.

The usual scripture reference given is Genesis 1:27. But this verse is also from Genesis 9:6 with an unexpected twist.

After giving Noah the basic principle of life in Genesis 9:4, that the life is in the blood, God goes on to instruct Noah about the taking of human life in verse 6: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." In other words, God Himself says that, for those who take the life of another, their own life must be taken. And He uses this idea of the "sanctity of life" as the reason why!

(Those who would use the sanctity of life as the reason not to take a human life not only argue against God, but they also use the last part of a verse as the scriptural foundation to reject and even condemn the first part of the very same verse! This is not exactly what you would call sound theology....

Basically, what God is saying is this: whoever is guilty of taking another's life must likewise be killed—but this time without guilt. The guilty one's life is no longer held sacred. "And the Lord shall return his blood upon his own head" (1 Kings 2:32).

This idea is explained in Deuteronomy 19, where God tells Moses to have "cities of refuge" designated as sanctuary for anyone who by accident or otherwise innocently takes a life. The purpose was to prevent the "guilt of innocent blood" which would result if the "avenger of blood" were to find and kill him.

Another consideration, from this same account but expressed a little differently in Numbers 35, is that the land itself becomes polluted by the shedding of innocent blood and the only remedy available to cleanse the land is the blood of the guilty. (Environmental activists, take note!)

What is absolutely vital to understand is that God Himself considers "innocent blood" to be a more important consideration than the "sanctity of life" and that the guilt of innocent blood can spell big trouble, both to an individual and a nation as well.

It is evident that our understanding of God may need to be adjusted. While it is absolutely true that "God is love" (1 John 4:8,16), it is more completely revealing that God exercises and delights in "lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness" (Jeremiah 9:24). We need to add righteousness and judgment to our perspective.

"Righteous judgment" seems to be a good term to use. It speaks of God's judgment (Romans 2:5) but Jesus also tells us to use it: "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24). Discern from God's perspective.

For example, Psalm 106 talks about both righteous judgment and innocent blood. In verses 30-31, Phinehas executed judgment and it was counted unto him as righteousness. The full story is found in Numbers 25, where Phinehas turned away God's wrath, being zealous for the Lord's sake, by killing an Israelite man who was with a Midianite woman. A plague was stopped by this single act.

In Psalm 106:34-42, the Israelites compromised God's righteous judgment upon the nations and their own God-centered world view, resulting in their own corruption. In verse 37, they sacrificed their sons and daughters to demons (child sacrifice: abortion).

In verse 38, the land is polluted with innocent blood. God's wrath came upon his own people as a result (v. 40), so that he gave them over to the heathen, their rulers hated them, their enemies oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection (v. 41-42).

Consider this: In America today, our nation's leadership has a decidedly heathen flavor (due in part to the error called "separation of church and state"); their main thrust of criticism is directed at the "religious right;" the only bigotry allowed is anti-Christian bigotry; and religious free speech rights have been limited by the courts and federal persecution ("prosecution," that is, under RICO and FACE) with possible felony consequences for praying on a public sidewalk! Psalm 106 seems to be speaking clearly even today.

Even the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" refers to murder and not righteous judgment.

The strength and validity of scriptural support for righteous judgment is comparable to support for the doctrine of tithing, which is a favorite subject of many churches today. The bottom line for the wicked is that they stand naked in their own wickedness (Hebrews 4:13), teetering at this very moment on the brink of eternal judgment with no guarantee of even one more moment of life before they fall. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

In conclusion, we ask again, Is God really "pro-life?" When we clarify the issue in this new broader context including the wicked in their wickedness, then the answer must be "no." God's perspective is not based on "life" but on such things as righteousness and the shedding of innocent blood. We "pro-life" Christians must free ourselves from the entanglements of religiosity, sentimentality and tradition so we can proclaim the real message of life to this wicked generation: "Turn from your evil way. Turn to Jesus Christ and live!"

This is not in any way a "call to arms" for Christians, but if God raises up another Phinehas (or an army of them...), be very careful how you judge (Psalm 94:16; Proverbs 17:15). ■

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