

contentious ISSUES

A Biblical Perspective on Tough Topics

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 1 January 5, 2025

“Abortion”

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we come to you today asking for your guidance, wisdom, and support as we begin this study. Help us to engage in meaningful discussion; allow us to grow closer as a group and nurture the bonds of community. Fill us with your grace Lord Jesus. It's in his name we pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NIV)

¹⁹Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

Psalms 139:13-16 (NIV)

*¹³For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
¹⁴I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.
¹⁵My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.
¹⁶Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be.*

Luke 1:39-45 (NIV)

³⁹At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴²In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!" ⁴³But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"

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INTRODUCTION

The abortion debate is a longstanding and contentious discourse that touches on the moral, legal, medical, and religious aspects of induced abortion. The debate most visibly polarizes around supporters of the self-described "pro-choice" and "pro-life" movements. So, where do Jesus followers stand on this issue?

When it comes to the debate on abortion, there are compassionate and committed Christians on both sides. Although the Bible never specifically mentions abortion, there are scripture passages that can help clarify our position on the issue:

- 1) The ending of human life is God's domain. (Genesis 9:5-6)
- 2) God sees us, knows us, and forms us in our mother's womb. (Psalm 139)
- 3) Those in the womb can sense God's Spirit. (Luke 1:39-45)
- 4) Our bodies are not our own, but belong to Christ. (I Cor. 6:13-20)
- 5) In Mary's story – God uses the unlikely and difficult to accomplish his purpose.

For our nation to move forward on this debate, both pro-life and pro-choice advocates need to find a middle ground. And for the Church to move forward on this issue, leaders need to speak about the sanctity of life, we all need to remember that God can bring something good from what we call 'mistakes,' and we need to reach out with grace and compassion to those who struggle with the decision to terminate a pregnancy.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you believe that there can be Christians with an opposite view on abortion than you have? Why or why not?
2. When do you believe life begins, and on what do you base your answer?
3. Read Luke 1:39-45 (on page 1). Two ideas can be drawn from this story. First, that God works through unlikely circumstances (young and unwed Mary giving birth to the Christ) and the second, that John "leaped" within his mother's womb – prompted by the Spirit – at the presence of Jesus (a passage that might indicate the Spirit's work in the womb). What significance does this have related to the abortion debate?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (on page 1). What perspective do we find in these verses regarding an individual's dominion over his or her body? What does it mean to be "members of Christ" and a temple of the Holy Spirit?
5. How can we share the message of God's unconditional love and grace with those who regret past decisions, including the decision to have an elective abortion?

FINAL APPLICATION

This week, pray that God would help you clarify your own position on the issue of abortion.