

ProLife Answers to ProChoice Arguments

By Randy Alcorn

Summary

Part One: Arguments Concerning Life, Humanity, and Personhood

1. **“It is uncertain when human life begins; that’s a religious question that cannot be answered by science.”**
 - a. If there *is* uncertainty about when human life begins, the benefit of the doubt should go to preserving life.
 - b. Medical textbooks and scientific reference works consistently agree that human life begins at conception.
 - c. Some of the world’s most prominent scientists and physicians testified to a U.S. Senate committee that human life begins at conception.
 - d. Many other prominent scientists and physicians have likewise affirmed with certainty that human life begins at conception.
 - e. The possibility of human cloning does nothing to discredit the fact that all humans conceived in the conventional manner began their lives at conception.
2. **“The fetus is just a part of the pregnant woman’s body, like her tonsils or appendix. You can’t seriously believe a frozen embryo is an actual person.”**
 - a. A body part is defined by the common genetic code it shares with the rest of its body; the unborn’s genetic code differs from his mother’s.
 - b. The child may die and the mother live, or the mother may die and the child live, proving they are two separate individuals.
 - c. The unborn child takes an active role in his own development, controlling the course of the pregnancy and the time of birth.
 - d. Being inside something is not the same as being part of something.
 - e. Human beings should not be discriminated against because of their place of residence.
 - f. There is substantial scientific reason to believe that frozen embryos are persons and should be granted the same rights as older, larger, and less vulnerable persons.
3. **“The unborn is an embryo or a fetus—just a simple blob of tissue, a product of conception—not a baby. Abortion is terminating a pregnancy, not killing a child.”**
 - a. Like *toddler* or *adolescent*, the terms *embryo* and *fetus* do not refer to nonhumans, but to humans at particular stages of development.
 - b. Semantics affect perceptions, but they do not change realities; a baby is a baby no matter what we call her.
 - c. From the moment of conception, the unborn is not simple, but very complex.
 - d. Prior to the earliest abortions, the unborn already has every body part she will ever have.
 - e. Every abortion stops a beating heart and terminates measurable brain waves.
 - f. Even in the earliest surgical abortions, the unborn child is clearly human in appearance.
 - g. Even before the unborn is obviously human in appearance, she is what she is—a human being.
 - h. No matter how much better it sounds, “terminating a pregnancy” is still terminating a life.
4. **“The fetus may be alive, but so are eggs and sperm. The fetus is a potential human being, not an actual one; It’s like a blueprint, not a house; an acorn, not an oak tree.”**
 - a. The ovum and sperm are each a product of another’s body; unlike the conceptus, neither is an independent entity.
 - b. The physical remains after an abortion indicate the end not of a potential life, but of an actual life.
 - c. Something nonhuman does not become human by getting older and bigger; whatever is human must be human from the beginning.
 - d. Comparing preborns and adults to acorns and oaks is dehumanizing and misleading.
 - e. Even if the analogy were valid, scientifically speaking an acorn is simply a little oak tree, just as an embryo is a little person.

5. **"The unborn isn't a person, with meaningful life. It's only inches in size and can't even think; it's less advanced than an animal and anyway, who says people have a greater right to live than animals?"**
 - a. Personhood is properly defined by membership in the human species, not by stage of development within that species.
 - b. Personhood is not a matter of size, skill, or degree of intelligence.
 - c. The unborn's status should be determined on an objective basis, not on subjective or self-serving definitions of personhood.
 - d. It is a scientific fact that there are thought processes at work in unborn babies.
 - e. If the unborn's value can be compared to that of an animal, there is no reason not to also compare the value of born people to animals.
 - f. Even if someone believes that people are no better than animals, why would they abhor the killing of young animals, while advocating the killing of young children?
 - g. It is dangerous when people in power are free to determine whether other, less powerful lives are meaningful.
 - h. Arguments against the personhood of the unborn are shrouded in rationalization and denial.
6. **"A fetus isn't a person until implantation...or until quickening or viability or when it first breathes."**
 - a. Implantation is a gauge of personhood only if location, nutrition, and interfacing with others make us human.
 - b. Quickening is a gauge of personhood only if someone's reality or value depends upon being noticed by another.
 - c. Viability is an arbitrary concept. Why not associate personhood with heartbeat, brain waves, or something else?
 - d. The point of viability changes because it depends on technology, not the unborn herself. Eventually babies may be viable from the point of conception.
 - e. In a broad sense, many born people are not viable because they are incapable of surviving without depending on others.
 - f. A child's "breathing," her intake of oxygen, begins long before birth.
 - g. Someone's helplessness or dependency should motivate us to protect her, not to destroy her.
7. **"Obviously life beings at birth. That's why we celebrate birthdays, not conception days, and why we don't have funerals following miscarriages."**
 - a. Our recognition of birthdays is cultural, not scientific.
 - b. Some people *do* have funerals after a miscarriage.
 - c. Funerals are an expression of our subjective attachment to those who have died, not a measurement of their true worth.
 - d. There is nothing about birth that makes a baby essentially different than he was before birth.
8. **"No one can really know that human life beings before birth."**
 - a. Children know that human life begins before birth.
 - b. Pregnant women know that human life begins before birth.
 - c. Doctors know that human life begins before birth.
 - d. Abortionists know that human life begins before birth.
 - e. Prochoice feminists know that human life begins before birth.
 - f. Society knows that human life begins before birth.
 - g. The media know that human life begins before birth.
 - h. Prochoice advocates know that human life begins before birth.
 - i. If we can't know that human life begins before birth, how can we know whether it begins at birth or later?

Part Two: Arguments Concerning Rights and Fairness

9. **"Even if the unborn are human beings, they have fewer rights than the woman. No one should be expected to donate her body as a life-support system for someone else."**
 - a. Once we grant that the unborn are human beings, it should settle the question of their right to live.

- b. The right to live doesn't increase with age and size; otherwise toddlers and adolescents have less right to live than adults.
 - c. The comparison between a baby's rights and a mother's rights is unequal. What is at stake in abortion is the mother's lifestyle, as opposed to the baby's life.
 - d. It is reasonable for society to expect an adult to live temporarily with an inconvenience if the only alternative is killing a child.
10. **"Every person has the right to choose. It would be unfair to restrict a woman's choice by prohibiting abortion."**
- a. Any civilized society restricts the individual's freedom to choose whenever that choice would harm an innocent person.
 - b. "Freedom to choose" is too vague for meaningful discussion; we must always ask, "Freedom to choose *what?*"
 - c. People who are prochoice about abortion are often not prochoice about other issues with less at stake.
 - d. The one-time choice of abortion robs someone else of a lifetime of choices and prevents him from ever exercising his rights.
 - e. Everyone is prochoice with it comes to the choices prior to pregnancy and after birth.
 - f. Nearly all violations of human rights have been defended on the grounds of the right to choose.
11. **"Every woman should have control over her own body. Reproductive freedom is a basic right."**
- a. Abortion assures that 650,000 females each year do *not* have control over their bodies.
 - b. Not all things done with a person's body are right, nor should they all be legally protected.
 - c. Prolifers consistently affirm true reproductive rights.
 - d. Even prochoicers must acknowledge that the "right to control one's body" argument has no validity if the unborn is a human being.
 - e. Too often "the right to control my life" becomes the right to hurt and oppress others for my own advantage.
 - f. Control over the body can be exercised to prevent pregnancy in the first place.
 - g. It is demeaning to a woman's body and self-esteem to regard pregnancy as an unnatural, negative, and "out of control" condition.
12. **"Abortion is a decision between a woman and her doctor. It's no one else's business. Everyone has a constitutional right to privacy."**
- a. The constitution does not contain a right to privacy.
 - b. Privacy is never an absolute right, but is always governed by other rights.
 - c. The encouragement or assistance of a doctor does not change the nature, consequences, or morality of abortion.
 - d. The father of the child is also responsible for the child and should have a part in this decision.
 - e. The father will often face serious grief and guilt as a result of abortion. Since his life will be significantly affected, shouldn't he have something to say about it?
13. **"It's unfair for an unmarried woman to have to face the embarrassment of pregnancy or the pain of giving up a child for adoption."**
- a. Pregnancy is not a sin. Society should not condemn or pressure an unmarried mother into abortion, but should help and support her.
 - b. The poor choice of premarital sex is never compensated for by the far worse choice of killing an innocent human being.
 - c. One person's unfair or embarrassing circumstances do not justify violating the rights of another person.
 - d. Adoption is a fine alternative that avoids the burden of child-raising, while saving a life and making a family happy; it is tragic that adoption is so infrequently chosen as an alternative to abortion.
 - e. The reason that adoption may be painful is the same reason that abortion is wrong—a human life is involved.
14. **"Abortion rights are fundamental for the advancement of women. They are essential to having equal rights with men."**
- a. Early feminists were prolife, not prochoice.
 - b. Some active feminists still vigorously oppose abortion.
 - c. Women's rights are not inherently linked to the right to abortion.
 - d. The basic premises of the abortion-rights movement are demeaning to women.
 - e. Many of the assumptions that connect women's welfare with abortion, the pill, and free sex have proven faulty.

- f. Some of the abortion-rights strategies assume female incompetence and subject women to ignorance and exploitation.
 - g. Abortion has become the most effective means of sexism ever devised, ridding the world of multitudes of unwanted females.
15. **“The circumstances of many women leave them no choice but an abortion.”**
- a. Saying they have no choice is not being prochoice, but proabortion.
 - b. Those who are truly prochoice must present a woman with a number of possible choices instead of just selling the choice of abortion.
 - c. “Abortion or misery” is a false portrayal of the options; it keeps women from pursuing—and society from providing—possible alternatives.
16. **“I’m personally against abortion, but I’m still prochoice. It’s a legal alternative and we don’t have the right to keep it from anyone. Everyone’s free to believe what they want, but we shouldn’t try to impose it on others.”**
- a. To be prochoice about abortion is to be proabortion.
 - b. The only good reason for being personally against abortion is a reason that demands we be against other people choosing to have abortions.
 - c. What is legal is not always right.
 - d. How can we tell people that they are perfectly free to believe abortion is the killing of children but that they are not free to act as if what they believe is really true?

Part Three: Arguments Concerning Social Issues

17. **“Every child a wanted child.’ It’s unfair to children to bring them into a world where they’re not wanted.”**
- a. Every child is wanted by someone; there is no such thing as an unwanted child.
 - b. There is a difference between an unwanted pregnancy and an unwanted child.
 - c. “Unwanted” describes not a condition of the child, but an attitude of adults.
 - d. The problem of unwantedness is a good argument for wanting children, but a poor argument for eliminating them.
 - e. What is most unfair to unwanted children is to kill them.
18. **“Having more unwanted children results in more child abuse.”**
- a. Most abused children were wanted by their parents.
 - b. Child abuse has not decreased since abortion was legalized, but has dramatically increased.
 - c. If children are viewed as expendable before birth, they will be viewed as expendable after birth.
 - d. It is illogical to argue that a child is protected from abuse through abortion since abortion *is* child abuse.
19. **“Restricting abortion would be unfair to the poor and minorities, who need it most.”**
- a. It is not unfair for some people to have less opportunity than others to kill the innocent.
 - b. The rich and white, not the poor and minorities, are most committed to unrestricted abortion.
 - c. Prochoice advocates want the poor and minorities to have abortions, but oppose requirements that abortion risks and alternatives be explained to them.
 - d. Planned Parenthood’s abortion advocacy was rooted in the eugenics movement and its bias against the mentally and physically handicapped and minorities.
20. **“Abortion helps solve the problem of overpopulation and raises the quality of life.”**
- a. The current birthrate in America is less than what is needed to maintain our population level.
 - b. The dramatic decline in our birthrate will have a disturbing economic effect on America.
 - c. Overpopulation is frequently blamed for problems with other causes.
 - d. If there is a population problem that threatens our standard of living, the solution is not to kill off part of the population.
 - e. Sterilization and abortion as cures to overpopulation could eventually lead to mandatory sterilization and abortion.
 - f. The “quality of life” concept is breeding a sense of human expendability that has far-reaching social implications.

21. “Even if abortion were made illegal, there would still be many abortions.”

- a. That harmful acts against the innocent will take place regardless of the law is a poor argument for having no law.
- b. The law can guide and educate people to choose better alternatives.
- c. Laws concerning abortion have significantly influenced whether women choose to have abortions.

22. “The antiabortion beliefs of the minority shouldn’t be imposed on the majority.”

- a. Major polls clearly indicate that the majority, not the minority, believes that there should be greater restrictions on abortion.
- b. Many people’s apparent agreement with abortion law stems from their ignorance of what the law really is.
- c. Beliefs that abortion should be restricted are embraced by a majority in each major political party.
- d. In 1973 the Supreme Court imposed a minority morality on the nation, ignoring the votes of citizens and the decisions of state legislatures.

23. “The antiabortion position is a religious belief that threatens the vital separation of church and state.”

- a. Many nonreligious people believe that abortion kills children and that it is wrong.
- b. Morality must not be rejected just because it is supported by religion.
- c. America was founded on a moral base dependent upon principles of the Bible and the Christian religion.
- d. Laws related to church and state were intended to assure freedom *for* religion, not freedom *from* religion.
- e. Religion’s waning influence on our society directly accounts for the moral deterioration threatening our future.

Part Four: Arguments Concerning Health and Safety

24. “If abortion is made illegal, tens of thousands of women will again die from back-alley and clothes-hanger abortions.”

- a. For decades prior to its legalization, 90 percent of abortions were done by physicians in their offices, not in back alleys.
- b. It is not true that tens of thousands of women were dying from illegal abortions before abortion was legalized.
- c. The history of abortion in Poland invalidates claims that making abortion illegal would bring harm to women.
- d. Women still die from *legal* abortions in America.
- e. If abortion became illegal, abortions would be done with medical equipment, not clothes hangers.
- f. We must not legalize procedures that kill the innocent just to make the killing process less hazardous.
- g. The central horror of illegal abortion remains the central horror of legal abortion.

25. “Abortion is a safe medical procedure—safer than full-term pregnancy and childbirth.”

- a. Abortion is not safer than full-term pregnancy and childbirth.
- b. Though the chances of a woman’s safe abortion are now greater, the number of suffering women is also greater because of the huge increase in abortions.
- c. Even if abortion were safer for the mother than childbirth, it would still remain fatal for the innocent child.
- d. Abortion can produce many serious medical problems.
- e. Abortion significantly raises the rate of breast cancer.
- f. The statistics on abortion complications and risks are often understated due to the inadequate means of gathering data.
- g. The true risks of abortion are rarely explained to women by those who perform abortions.

26. “Abortion is an easy and painless procedure.”

- a. The various abortion procedures are often both difficult and painful for women.
- b. Abortion is often difficult and painful for fathers, grandparents, and siblings of the aborted child.
- c. Abortion is often difficult and painful for clinic workers.
- d. Abortion is difficult and painful for the unborn child.
- e. Even if abortion were made easy or painless for everyone, it wouldn’t change the bottom-line problem that abortion kills children.

27. “Abortion relieves women of stress and responsibility, and thereby enhances their psychological well-being.”

- a. Research demonstrates abortion’s adverse psychological effects on women

- b. The many postabortion therapy and support groups testify to the reality of abortion's potentially harmful psychological effects.
- c. The suicide rate is significantly higher among women who have had abortions than among those who haven't.
- d. Postabortion syndrome is a diagnosable psychological affliction.
- e. Many professional studies document the reality of abortion's adverse psychological consequences on a large number of women.
- f. Abortion can produce both short- and longer-term psychological damage, especially a sense of personal guilt.
- g. Most women have not been warned about and are completely unprepared for the psychological consequences of abortion.

28. "Abortion providers are respected medical professionals working in the woman's best interests."

- a. Abortion clinics do not have to maintain the high standards of health, safety, and professionalism required of hospitals.
- b. Many clinics are in the abortion industry because of the vast amounts of money involved.
- c. Clinic workers commonly prey on fear, pain, and confusion to manipulate women into getting abortions.
- d. Clinic workers regularly mislead or deceive women about the nature and development of their babies.
- e. Abortionists engage in acts so offensive to the public that most media outlets refuse to describe them even in the abortionist's own words.
- f. Abortionists, feminists, a past president of the United States, many congressmen, and the Supreme Court have defended partial-birth abortion, one of the most chilling medical atrocities in human history.
- g. Abortion clinics often exploit the feminist connection, making it appear that their motive is to stand up for women.
- h. Doctors doing abortions violate the fundamental oaths of the medical profession.

Part Five: Arguments Concerning the Hard Cases

29. "What about a woman whose life is threatened by pregnancy or childbirth?"

- a. It is an extremely rare case when abortion is required to save the mother's life.
- b. When two lives are threatened and only one can be saved, doctors must always save that life.
- c. Abortion for the mother's life and abortion for the mother's health are usually not the same issue.
- d. Abortion to save the mother's life was legal before convenience abortion was legalized and would continue to be if abortion were made illegal again.

30. "What about a woman whose unborn baby is diagnosed as deformed or handicapped?"

- a. The doctor's diagnosis is sometimes wrong.
- b. The child's deformity is often minor.
- c. Medical tests for deformity may cause as many problems as they detect.
- d. Handicapped children are often happy, always precious, and usually delighted to be alive.
- e. Handicapped children are not social liabilities, and bright and "normal" people are not always social assets.
- f. Using dehumanizing language may change our thinking, but not the child's nature or value.
- g. Our society is hypocritical in its attitude toward handicapped children.
- h. The adverse psychological effects of abortion are significantly more traumatic for those who abort because of deformity.
- i. The arguments for killing a handicapped unborn child are valid only if they also apply to killing born people who are handicapped.
- j. Abortions due to probably handicaps rob the world of unique human beings who would significantly contribute to society.
- k. Abortions due to imperfections have no logical stopping place; they will lead to designer babies, commercial products to be bred and marketed, leaving other people to be regarded as inferior and disposable.

31. "What about a woman who is pregnant due to rape or incest?"

- a. Pregnancy due to rape is extremely rare, and with proper treatment can be prevented.
- b. Rape is never the fault of the child; the guilty party, not an innocent party, should be punished.
- c. The violence of abortion parallels the violence of rape.

- d. Abortion does not bring healing to a rape victim.
- e. A child is a child regardless of the circumstances of his conception.
- f. What about already-born people who are “products of rape”?
- g. All that is true of children conceived in rape is true of those conceived in incest.

Final Thoughts on the Hard Cases:

- 1. No adverse circumstance for one human being changes the nature and worth of another human being.
- 2. Laws must not be built on exceptional cases.

Part Six: Arguments against the Character of Prolifers

32. “Antiabortionists are so cruel that they insist on showing hideous pictures of dead babies.”

- a. What is hideous is not the pictures themselves, but the reality they depict.
- b. Pictures challenge our denial of the horrors of abortion. If something is too horrible to look at, perhaps it is too horrible to condone.
- c. Nothing could be more relevant to the discussion of something than that which shows what it really is.
- d. It is the prochoice position, not the prolife position, that is cruel.

33. “Prolifers don’t care about women and they don’t care about babies once they’re born. They have no right to speak against abortion unless they are willing to care for these children.”

- a. Prolifers are actively involved in caring for women in crisis pregnancies and difficult child-raising situations.
- b. Prolifers are actively involved in caring for unwanted children and the other “disposable people” in society.
- c. It is abortion providers who do not provide support for women choosing anything other than abortion.

34. “The antiabortionists are a bunch of men telling women what to do.”

- a. There is no substantial difference between men and women’s views of abortion.
- b. Some polls suggest that more women than men oppose abortion.
- c. The great majority of prolife workers are women.
- d. If men are disqualified from the abortion issue, they should be disqualified on both sides.
- e. Men are entitled to take a position on abortion.
- f. There are many more women in prolife organizations than there are in proabortion organizations.
- g. Of women who have had abortions, far more are prolife activists than prochoice activists.

35. “Antiabortionists talk about the sanctity of human life, yet they favor capital punishment.”

- a. Not all Prolifers favor capital punishment.
- b. Capital punishment is rooted in a respect for innocent human life.
- c. There is a vast difference between punishing a convicted murderer and killing an innocent child.

36. “Antiabortion fanatics break the law, are violent, and bomb abortion clinics.”

- a. Media coverage of prolife civil disobedience often bears little resemblance to what actually happens.
- b. Prolife civil disobedience should not be condemned without understanding the reasons behind it.
- c. Peaceful civil disobedience is consistent with the belief that the unborn are human beings.
- d. Prolife protests have been remarkably nonviolent, and even when there has been violence, it has often been committed by clinic employees and escorts.
- e. Abortion clinic bombing and violence are rare, and are neither done nor endorsed by prolife organizations.

37. “The antiabortionists distort the facts and resort to emotionalism to deceive the public.”

- a. The facts themselves make abortion an emotional issue.
- b. It is not the prolife position, but the prochoice position that relies on emotionalism more than truth and logic.
- c. The prolife position is based on documented facts and empirical evidence, which many prochoice advocates ignore or distort.
- d. The prochoice movement consistently caricatures and misrepresents Prolifers and their agenda.
- e. The prochoice movement, from its beginnings, has lied to and exploited women, including the “roe of *Roe v. Wade* and the “Doe” of *Doe v. Bolton*.

38. “Antiabortion groups hide behind a profamily façade, while groups such as Planned Parenthood are truly profamily because they assist in family planning.”

- a. The prochoice movement's imposition of "family planning" on teenagers has substantially contributed to the actual cause of teen pregnancy.
- b. Through its opposition to parental notification and consent, Planned Parenthood consistently undermines the value and authority of the family.
- c. Planned Parenthood makes huge financial profits from persuading people to get abortions.
- d. Planned Parenthood has been directly involved in the scandals of trafficking baby body parts.
- e. As demonstrated in the case of Becky Bell, the prochoice movement is willing to distort and exploit family tragedies to promote its agenda.
- f. Planned Parenthood, the prochoice movement, and the media ignore family tragedies that do not support the prochoice agenda.

Summary Argument

39. "The last three decades of abortion rights have helped make our society a better place to live."

- a. Abortion has left terrible holes in our society.
- b. Abortion has made us a nation of schizophrenics concerning our children.
- c. Abortion is a modern holocaust which is breeding unparalleled violence and to which we are accomplices.
- d. Abortion is taking us in a direction from which we might never return.
- e. Abortion has ushered in the brave new world of human pesticides.
- f. Abortion has led us into complete moral subjectivism in which we are prone to justify as ethical whatever it is we want to do.