

IS THE CHURCH GETTING USED TO THE HORROR OF ABORTION?

The Deluded Pride of 'Shouting Out' Your Abortion

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Romans 12:9-11 - "Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. [10] Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. [11] Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord."

There is something I wanted you to see in those two video clips. These aren't demonic people. I chose these two clips because they contained no profanity. The people seemed, albeit a little broken by circumstances, fairly normal in temperament. And they weren't ashamed of what they had done. This is what gives their words so much appeal in today's battle for moral ground. They consider their abortions the way many in the church have come to consider abortion. They sound tolerant. After all, they aren't forcing anyone *else* to practice abortion. They seem generous and reasonable and measured in their words.

If normal people can have abortions and talk openly about them it seems we all should at least be willing to *listen* as openly as they are to *speak*. There's something almost *unfair* feeling in dogmatically *opposing* someone who is speaking her heart on a difficult subject. What kind of *red-neck* would denounce these personal testimonies?

Christians need to be able to *frame this issue Biblically*. And the way I do this is as follows. There are only *two possible reactions* open to the person who has no intention of *repenting* of sin.

The *first* is simply to *deny* sin. Excuses are offered. Blame is shifted. God's moral absolutes are relativized. This happens all the time. And the goal is to remove personal guilt. It takes some effort, but eventually the volume of conscience can be turned down. It is simply untrue, as many Christians suggest, that *every* woman who had an abortion lives life filled with regret and shame. Regret and shame aren't impossible to overcome.

I said there were *two* possible options for those who refused to repent of sin. The *first, denial*, isn't the preferred course of action in dodging repentance. The *second* course of action is not *denial* of sin, but *pride* in sin. This is preferred because while *denying* sin can make future sins easier for *me*, *pride* in sin actually *promotes* the same sinful action in *others*. And no one likes to be a *lonely* sinner.

And so we find these kinds of fulfilled prophecies in the Scriptural account of the anatomy of wickedness - **Romans 1:28-32** - "And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, [29] being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, [30] slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, *boastful*, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, [31] without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; [32] and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them."

Sinners always *approve* - "*give hearty approval*" (32) - of those involved in the same sins. This is the darkest form of *self-protection*. I *need* others' joint involvement to justify my wickedness. And nothing will encourage sin in others more than my own *pride* in my guilt.

But the Biblical bottom line - the whole weight of divine revelation - rests down in this foundation. ***A wicked act doesn't become righteous just because our culture no longer feels shame for it!***

Our opening text from Romans 12 has a haunting relevance to the "***Shout Your Abortion***" phenomena. The Christian is called upon to have a response to those who would proudly present wickedness as righteous. We are commanded not to *ignore* wickedness, or even merely *tolerate* it.

That's why we're looking at **Romans 12:9-11** - *especially verses 9 and 11*. The words used at the end of **verse 9** are such vigorous words. They seem to convey something really strong and active - "***Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.***"

"***Abhor***" and "***hold fast***" (*cling*) are not every day, ordinary words. They are worlds apart from simply "***dislike***" and "***like***." They express something far more passionate and gutsy. These are not *yawn* words. These are not *boring* words. They're highly *reactionary*. These are words that say, "***Get up! Think strongly about this. Get passionate. Inwardly scream!***"

These words say, "***Is this evil? Is this really evil? Think about this because if it is evil you should absolutely abhor it! And you should***

be teaching your kids to abhor it. There is no virtue in tolerating everything. Real evil should make your skin crawl and your blood boil. If it is evil you should feel the evil of it with intensity. Don't abhor people. But you must abhor the evil."

And the same goes for the good. You and I aren't called just to ***admire*** the good, or to ***agree*** with the good. In this morally dark world, the truly good is going to get rare. It's ***precious*** beyond all telling and must be ***treasured***. You and I are to ***cling*** to the good. We are to cling to the good the way you cling to your spouse after a month of separation. The idea here is the good is not only ***precious***. It quickly ***slips away*** in this world. It ***disappears***.

Shout your praise when there is something truly good. Prize it more than diamonds. We are to sink our teeth into its rich taste and passionately savor its benefits. We are to pursue and cling to righteousness and goodness more than fine gold, so the Bible says.

Both these words reveal the whole personality. What you ***abhor*** and what you ***cling to*** reveals the state of your heart. Christians simply ***must*** be strongly against some things in this fallen world. You must ***choose a side***. You can't cling to ***both*** the evil and the good.

There isn't to be space for every moral option in your mind. It is incredibly wicked to treat evil and good alike. Evil and good each call for a distinctly passionate response. ***It is not generous or compassionate or in any way right to merely tolerate an evil we are called to abhor***. This doesn't make you a ***generous*** person. It makes you an ***ungodly*** person. And it is not righteous or holy to ***mildly appreciate*** a good we are called to ***praise and prize and fight for and cling to***.

"Well, I'm just not really a passionate person, pastor Don. I don't get that ***engaged*** in these kinds of things. I'm just not an ***excitable*** sort of person. I let other people abhor and protest the evil. I let other people risk life and money to protect and promote the good."

And our text today says we must never use that kind of reasoning to justify ***moral lukewarmness***. Don't water down the clear commands of Scripture with your own emotional temperament. Rather, shape your response and your moral metal by the clear teaching of the Word of God. God Himself is absolutely passionate about what is good and what is evil. Read the Psalms. See the things God says He hates! That's right. When God hates something ***He talks about it. He says He hates it. God expresses His hatred***. And He wants to make us like Himself.

1) **WE ALREADY KNOW HOW WICKED ABORTION IS**

We've certainly studied this before in our church. Here's what I think most of us already know about abortion:

- a) ***Abortion is evil*** (remember - "***abhor*** what is evil") ***because what is happening in the womb of a pregnant woman is a person forming work of God***:

Psalm 139:13 - "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb."

Only God puts persons together in the womb. No earthly mother assembles the parts of that ***other*** little body. It is ***God's*** work. Abortion isn't just an attack on the pre-born child. It is the most wicked assault on the handiwork of Almighty God. It is usurping the Creator-rights of the King of the universe.

- b) ***Abortion is evil because the taking of non-criminal life is the prerogative of God alone***:

Job 1:21 - "And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

These are Job's words when he learns that his ten children were killed. He's certainly not happy that they are dead, but his words recognize only ***God*** has the right to end the life of the persons He has created.

- c) ***Abortion is evil because babies torn apart in the womb bear the image of God***. This is so clear in the Scriptures. It is highly significant that the Bible says ***John the Baptist*** was filled with the Holy Spirit while still in his mother's womb:

Luke 1:15 - "...for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and ***he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb***."

This means that all human life, inside and outside the womb has a dignity that nothing else in creation does.

- d) ***Abortion is evil because God has revealed in His Word that it is His special desire and interest to give special care for the weak and defenseless in this world:***

Isaiah 25:4 - "For you have been a stronghold to the poor, a stronghold to the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat; for the breath of the ruthless is like a storm against a wall...."

- e) ***Abortion is evil because it is a sign of unbelief in the power and promise of God to think that killing the unborn baby is the only way God can make a livable and hopeful future for either the child or the mother.***

This is the lie of the whole ***"every child a wanted child"*** argument. This is an insane argument. What shall we do with unwanted two year olds? Or unwanted and ignored eighty-five year olds? Or unwanted ethnic groups and peoples. We've been here before with the holocaust and the slave trade. We've seen where will this track of logic take us.

- f) ***Finally, abortion is evil because it is essentially a way of providing women with the same supposedly consequence-free approach to the unlicensed sexual freedom men supposedly get.***

Make no mistake about it. Abortion is ***not*** primarily a medical issue. It is a ***feminist*** issue and it is a ***financial*** issue. Abortion is big, big business. It is a huge cash cow for those who perform them.

So, in thinking through what should be in our hearts in this Sunday, I didn't think I really needed to add to the list ***more*** reasons why abortion is evil. I don't think many of us ***doubt*** that abortion is evil. And if you ***did*** still doubt that it was evil, I don't think I could give you ***enough*** reasons to change your mind.

No, I think the need is probably quite different. Our need is to ***"keep our spiritual fervor"*** in the cause of life. Our need is to not grow weary and to not grow bored with the whole issue of the preciousness of life in the womb and the defense of these silent, helpless victims.

And there ***is*** a real battle with our own hearts here. I want to wind up by reading you something in a ***William Bennett*** article on the wretched violence of ***partial-birth abortions***. But before I read it I wonder how many of us have really thought through the horrors of this incredibly vicious and violent act.

Of course, Bennett was writing from an American perspective. But we Canadians can't easily separate ourselves from the massive gravitation pull of the world's moral climate. Bennett recalls that in the U.S. both the Senate and the House of Representatives passed a bill ***banning*** this hideous procedure unless the life of the mother was at stake. Quite a while back, on April 10, 1996, President Clinton ***vetoed that bill*** and its passing was not sustained in the Senate. After that then President Bush had twice vetoed attempts by congress to pass legislation making partial birth abortions even easier to obtain. We should thank God for that.

I want you to think about these deeply shocking words as you remember those ***"Shout Your Abortion"*** videos we viewed earlier. I have read these words before but I want to carve them again on your mind. Listen to this account from ***Brenda Shafer***, a registered nurse with thirteen years of experience. She was passionately pro-choice, was assigned a position in an abortion clinic, and didn't see any problem with it. But she was wrong.

Here are her own words upon witnessing a partial-birth abortion:

"I stood at the doctors side and watched him perform a partial-birth abortion on a woman who was six months pregnant. The baby's heartbeat was clearly visible on the ultrasound screen. The doctor delivered the baby's body and arms - everything but this little boy's head. The baby's body was moving. His little fingers were clasping together. He was kicking his feet. Then the doctor took a pair of scissors and inserted them into the back of the baby's head. The baby's arms jerked out in a flinch - a startled reaction - like a baby does when he thinks he might fall. Then the doctor slowly opened the scissors up. Then he stuck a high-powered suction tube into the hole and sucked the baby's brains out. Now the baby was completely limp. I never went back to the clinic. But I am still haunted by the face of that little boy. It was

the most perfect, angelic face I have ever seen. ”

Now this account is what prompted William Bennett to say the following when he read the quote about partial-birth abortions I just read to you. Please let these words land on your heart with their appropriate weight:

“The congress’s failure to override then President Clinton’s veto of the ‘partial-birth abortion’ legislation is illustrative of the culture of indifference. When it comes to abortion, there may be some very rare difficult moral cases, but this is an easy one - the presidential sanctioning of a procedure that is, for all intents and purposes, plain infanticide. What was most striking to me was the lack of virtually any public response. Now, it is true that most people don’t know about the partial-birth abortion procedure, and that the pro-abortionist camp spreads misinformation. But still, we cannot escape the fact that we had something of a national issue over infanticide - and infanticide won because of a popular president’s veto - and that very little was heard from those Americans who did follow the debate - and that the Republican presidential and vice-presidential candidates, and many congressional candidates, said little or nothing about the issue during the presidential campaign. Americans looked at the issue of infanticide and said ‘yes’ to it...”

Now, I’m sure that most of us here would say “amen” to Bennett’s words. And I’m sure most of us are horrified by that description of partial-birth abortion. And that’s **not** the issue in this teaching. We don’t **need** more reasons why abortion is wrong. We all **know** “pro-choice” is just a polite way of saying we want the choice to take another person’s life. And we all **know** such a choice is immoral and irrational in a sane world.

But there is another danger to face as well. I think we are slowly **getting used** to abortion. We don’t **like** it. But we’re learning to **accept** it - like you can start to find your way around in the dark after you’ve been in it for a while. This matters because this is **always** the cooling effect that comes with the passing of time. The same thing is quickly happening in the church regarding same-sex marriage and transgenderism.

And that’s what this sermon is all about. That’s where Paul’s words to the church from **Romans 12:11** come into play, and I want to close this message with them:

Romans 12:11 - “Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.”

2) **“DO NOT BE SLOTHFUL IN ZEAL”**

Literally, ***“not lazy in earnestness.”*** Did you know you can get lazy in **earnestness**? We know we can be lazy in our **work**. But Paul is describing a different **kind** of laziness - one that is just as deadly. The RSV says, ***“Never flag in zeal.”*** The NIV says, ***“Never be lacking in zeal.”***

This is Paul’s rebuke to passivity and apathy and indifference. And this is the important point - Paul assumes that if you see this kind of cultural apathy growing in your heart, **you can do something about it**. That’s why he addresses these commands to your **will**. He’s saying, ***“Stop being lazy in earnestness. Don’t allow this to continue. Change this attitude! If you can’t change the circumstances, at least challenge your indifference. Teach your children to abhor evil!”***

Spiritual engagement and passion dies like a **marriage** dies. People don’t just wake one morning after the honeymoon, shocked to discover that, surprise, surprise, it’s Thursday and they hate each other. No, couples **drift apart** by not **maintaining** expressions and actions of love and appreciation. Remember this point - ***Spiritual passion cools the way a bowl of soup cools.*** It cools from just sitting.

Don’t let the culture’s indifference **take any more ground in your mind. Stay morally awake. Care about the things others are careless about!** Don’t just sit in front of the TV, or in front of the computer, or at the desk at the office and lose yourself in another world. Fight the fight of faith! ***Indifference is sacrilege against the great purposes of God in this world!***

3) **“BE FERVENT IN SPIRIT”**

The first command is a warning to **stop** something - ***“Don’t be lazy in earnestness.”*** This second command is to **start** something - ***“Be fervent in spirit.”***

The Greek word for *fervent* is "*zeontes*" - meaning "*boiling*." Be fervent - possess a *boiling spirit* about certain things. This doesn't mean *reckless* or *irrational*. Paul is saying we have to be very careful, as Christians, that we keep our minds *renewed* (Romans 12:1-2) and not *conformed and numbed* by the indifference of this world to the cause of truth and life.

You can't just live the Christian life from a cold, distant list of rules in a book. You must have *passion*. And you must do everything in your power to *stay* passionate about God's Kingdom. You must fight against all the encroachments of apathy and indifference. You must never get *bored* with God's agenda.

And here's the thing - if you stay *fervent - boiling - in spirit*, *God will give you more excitement, and fill your life with more significance than a thousand artificial stimulants and toys and distractions.*

This is the battle we all face. We want our minds *renewed, alive and boiling with a passion for God* while we live in a world that wants to make our minds *stale, cold and useless*. So never give up, never give in. *Care. Keep caring. Never stop caring* until Jesus comes again and brings His reward with Him.