

My name is Matt Chandler, and I am the lead teaching pastor at The Village Church in Flower Mound, Texas. The Village Church has five campuses throughout the DFW Metroplex, with an overall attendance of about 13,000 people.

I am grateful for the opportunity to lend my voice to this issue, as it is one I preach and teach on frequently. I believe this is both a scientific issue and a deeply theological issue. Today what I want to discuss is the essence of life itself and the ramifications of both what the Bible and science teach.

When Life Begins

The idea that life begins at conception is a scientific fact. The beginning for every person is when a sperm and an egg collide. In that collision, a new strand of DNA is born, wholly separate from the mother's DNA and wholly separate from the father's DNA. Life begins at conception.

The Bible says the same thing. According to Scripture and thousands of years of Christian orthodoxy, God is actively involved in this scientific process, forming us in the womb—our personality, our makeup, how we're going to interact and react. Psalm 139 tells of God putting us together and knowing all our days. In talking about personhood, the Bible states that human beings are made in the *imago dei*—the image of God. It makes it clear that the *imago dei* is passed through fathers and mothers into their sons and daughters.

The real question becomes: *When does the soul appear?* People are willing to cut out a clump of cells; we do it all the time. People aren't nearly as willing to tear out a soul. But is the soul present at 2 cells? 8 cells? 16? 32? The idea of killing a group of cells doesn't bother most people, but the idea of killing a human being bothers people deeply.

As both a believer of the Bible and a believer of science, I understand that not only does life begin at conception, but personhood and the soul also begin at conception.

When Science Isn't Enough

I used to hope that science would win the fight against abortion because the facts are so overwhelming. For example, at 8 weeks in the womb, babies have their own blood. If the doctor needs to take a sample from the baby, it is the baby's own blood. At 8 weeks, babies recoil from pricking; they will pull up their leg to avoid pain. At 8 weeks, all of the organs are present. The brain is functioning. New evidence even suggests that dreaming may occur. The heart is pumping. The kidneys are cleaning fluid. The baby has its own fingerprint. All of this happens at 8 weeks.

Virtually every one of the 1 million abortions that happened last year in the United States took place after 8 weeks. Science is no longer enough to win the argument because the argument is no longer rational. In the scenario that a woman gets in her car to go have an abortion and is hit by a drunk driver on the way there, that driver can be tried in court for

involuntary manslaughter. Yet if the woman had made it to the clinic, she would be well within her legal rights to have the baby aborted. This is insanity.

Often, abortion is presented as a woman's issue, a choice that she can make with her own body. Yet that idea is not true in any domain of society. The government tells us all the time what to do with our bodies. Prostitution is illegal. Taking off all your clothes and driving nude is illegal.

However, it's perfectly legal to have the human being growing inside a woman's body killed. That baby in a woman's body is not her body. On a scientific level, the baby has its own blood, its own DNA, its own brain and its own organs. It is inside of her, but it is not her.

What We Can Do

The argument is no longer rational; it's ludicrous. Abortion is murder. It's a holocaust like the world has yet to see. The United States alone has slaughtered 55 million babies since *Roe v. Wade*. And if we do nothing, we'll look back on this issue in shame, much like those who sat by idly during the civil rights movement. For myself, I want to be able to look my children in their faces when they're 40 and say that I did all I could on this front.

Abortion in this country must stop. Morality isn't something that can be legislated, but lives can certainly be saved. Who is weaker than the unborn? Who has less of a voice? As citizens of this country, we should leverage our opportunity to engage and invoke change. This bill is an important step in the right direction.

Summary

Thank you to Representative Hagan for giving me the opportunity to speak about this issue. Thank you to all the representatives who have had a part in developing this bill and for championing the rights of those who are most vulnerable in our society—the unborn.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Chandler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Matt Chandler
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President of the Acts 29 Church Planting Network