

FULFILLED CHRISTIAN LIVING IN A PAGAN WORLD
"Part V: Biblical Civil Obedience and Disobedience"
(1 Peter 2:11-17)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) The following companies financially contribute to Planned Parenthood Federation of America, an organization that promotes abortion-on-demand in counseling pregnant women: American Express, American Telephone and Telegraph, Bristol-Myers, Cargill, Chase-Manhattan, Chemical Bank, Citicorp/Citibank, Dayton Hudson, General Mills, BP America, H. J. Heinz, Honeywell, Lubrizol, Morgan Guaranty Trust, Pillsbury, Prudential, Rockwell International, Scott Paper, Winn-Dixie Stores and Xerox Corporation! Does this mean that we Christians are sinning if we purchase products that these companies put out? If so, we have a problem: these companies participate in just about every segment of American life!

(2) At conception, the single-cell has all 46 chromosomes that will determine its intellectual, physical and emotional profile. After a few days, the cell will send a signal to the mother's body to stop her menstrual cycle. At 6 weeks, there are brain waves present in the "fetus." In 8 weeks, the heart is operational. In ten weeks, the fetus has what the FBI will imprint once he is born to identify him from all other people on earth -- he has his own set of unique finger prints! Yet our government sanctions abortion-on-demand!

Do you know what the IRS rules? If a woman attempts to have an abortion, but the "fetus" lives for 48 hours outside of her womb before dying, the woman can claim that infant on her 1040 as a dependent in the year that the child died!

Our federal courts rule that if a woman is driving in a car on her way to an abortion clinic to have an abortion, and if she gets into an accident caused by the fault of another driver, and if she miscarries and the fetus dies as a result of that accident, the driver at fault is guilty of manslaughter! But if she has the accident and does not miscarry, and continues on her way to the clinic and aborts the baby, that same mother is **innocent** of manslaughter!

(3) A Congresswoman's aide was once asked, "When you were in your mother's womb, when were you not you?" There is no answer!!

In view of these things, should believers demonstrate at or forcibly attack abortion clinics to obey Proverbs 24:11: "... rescue those being led to death"? Why or why not?!

Need: "Abortion kills a human being! Psalm 51:5 reveals that one is a sinner at conception, so one is a PERSON at conception! Since our government legalizes abortion-on-demand, should we not obey Proverbs 24:11 and forcibly rescue those being led to death?"

- I. **Peter commands Christians to obey government, 1 Pet. 2:13-14.**
- II. **God's purpose for this command is to promote one's Gospel testimony which is God's use of pagan governments.**
 - A. Even pagan governments fulfill divine order in the world.
 1. God uses pagan governments in the Church Age to fulfill His will on the earth, cf. Acts 17:26.
 2. That will is to use governments to promote the Gospel, v. 27.
 3. As such, even pagan Rome was God's tool so that believers had to obey it, Romans 13:1, 4, 6; 1 Peter 2:14b.
 - B. Thus, it is an **extension** of one's Gospel testimony to heed government authority in accord with God's will for government in Acts 17:26-27; 1 Peter 2:15.
- III. **Conversely then, one must disobey civil authority when its laws counter his Gospel testimony, for human government then opposes God's purpose for its establishment, Acts 5:29; Acts 17 :26-27!**
- IV. **Central to applying this principle is the method the believer employs in obeying civil authorities, 1 Peter 2:16.**
 - A. The Roman Christians Peter addressed were probably being slandered by Roman citizens though they still enjoyed practical liberties, Ibid.
 - B. These Christians were to use what liberties they still had under pagan Rome not to practice evil, but to practice godliness, 1 P.2:16f.
 - C. In this way, they would by way of good works overcome slanderous misconceptions about their lives and faith, 1 P. 2:11f.
- V. **However, special Scripture applies to show us what to do in the Abortion debate as follows:**
 - A. Abortion-on-demand murders a human, so a Christian must not practice this murderous act, Ps. 51:5; 1 Peter 2:16.
 - B. However, there are technical Scriptural contradictions regarding the believer's relationship to abortion clinics!

1. On the one hand, Ryrie's Study Bible notes that Proverbs 24:11 teaches "Forceful intervention, so as to rescue those being led to death . . .", Ryrie St. Bi., KJV, fn. to Prov. 24:11. Thus, believers **there** are commanded to use force against abortion clinics!!!
2. On the other hand, such force against clinics makes **unbelievers** commonly malign or misinterpret the Gospel as they view such civil disobedience as evil; thus, Christians who publicly demonstrate or use force on clinics hurt their testimonies!
3. In such Scriptural conflicts, Matthew 12:5,7 applies as follows:
 - a. Jesus taught putting "inner spiritual vitality" (mercy) above "external formality" (sacrifice) when Scriptural commands put us into such binds, Mt. 12:7, Bib.Know.Com., N.T., p. 45.
 - b. He illustrates with Matthew 12:5. (a) The Hebrews were not to do servile work on the Sabbath day or suffer capital punishment, Ex. 31:15. (b) Servile work for the temple priests included preparing the sacrifices as priests received **livelihood** portions from those sacrifices, Lev. 2:3, etc. (c) Yet, God commanded livelihood remuneration type offerings for the priests to do on the Sabbath for the **worship services**, cf. Nu. 28:9-10 with Lev. 2:3! (d) Thus, **God** told priests to disobey His **capital Sabbath offense** to meet the spiritual needs of the congregation by offering the sacrifices, Mt. 12:5,7!
 - c. Since Scripture places eternal life above earthly life in value (He. 11:35), we profane Prov. 24:11 as the temple priests did the Sabbath and preserve our witness by abstaining from demonstrating against or using force on abortion clinics!

Lesson Application: (1) *To relate to government properly, one first believes on Christ for salvation from sin; this fulfills God's purpose in establishing the pagan government one has over him in the first place, Acts 17:26-27. (2) As a believer, he (a) confesses whatever sins he commits (1 John 1:9) and (b) depends upon the indwelling Holy Spirit for behavior control to (c) submit to every pagan governmental authority as his testimony of being a godly person, 1 Peter 2:14-16. (3) (4) Generally, we should (a) obey pagan governments to preserve their testimonies. (b) Christians disobey government when the Gospel testimony demands it, Acts 17:26-27; 5:29. (c) Caught between two opposite Scripture technicalities regarding abortion clinics, the believer follows Christ's teaching in Matthew 12:5-7 and refrains from using force against clinics to support the Gospel!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

A young woman wrote the following letter to the editor of the Torrington Register-Citizen entitled: "Picketing clinics a waste of effort." Her remarks include these: "I've watched many women, some of whom I've grown up with, struggle with real inner pain and sadness over the babies they've lost through abortion. They tell me they had no jobs, no money and they were alienating their families. But most of all they tell me they were scared. They tell me they had no emotional support -- no one who cared enough to help them keep their babies . . . All of you picketers, where were you when these women who would have kept their babies but felt they couldn't . . . (made) . . . their abortion appointments? Were you picketing? Did you show them the compassion and friendship they needed or did you show them only your anger?"

This same young woman one day came to our church alone and asked if she could check out a book she thought might be in our library. She wanted to read Jerry Falwell's, If I Should Die Before I Wake . . . that reveals Rev. Falwell's ministry of providing homes and adoption services for unwed mothers. She told me it was for a friend.

Little did I know at the time that **she** was the unwed mother, and that **she** was struggling with her own feelings about being pregnant out of wedlock. I went ahead and checked the book out to her, knowing that it could possibly encourage a mother in trouble from getting an abortion even if we never saw the book again.

Great news! She delivered her healthy baby, and brought the book back!!

God wants us to watch how we take our stand on righteousness before the weak and unsaved and before a pagan government, that the thrust of our Gospel of salvation by grace never be lost in our intoleration for evils even in government. The infinite love of God and the absolute righteousness of God always merge into one if we are doing what is right.