

## Chapter 11

### *On protecting a woman's RIGHT TO CHOOSE*

*For the longest time in America, if a woman wanted to end an unwanted pregnancy she needed to seek out medical hacks in back alleys. That all changed with the liberation of women in the 1970's. Women rightly demanded to make their own decisions about their bodies. It has always seemed odd, that the chief opponents of a woman's right to choose are white men.*

*There has been much said about when the abortion of a fetus is acceptable. Liberals tend to put the right of abortion much later in the gestation term of the unborn fetus. Conservatives tend to put the deadline much sooner or not at all.*

*The debate about abortion has two main narratives. First, the timing of when an unborn fetus actually becomes a human being. This determination is still a matter of belief, not science. Some claim the fetus is a human at the point of conception, even though at that point the unborn is basically a clump of cells. Some say a fetus becomes a human when the heart beat can first be heard. Other say it is later in the pregnancy when the fetus develops its mental capacities.*

*This debate has no correct answer. Currently, an individual's position is not based on scientific truth, but rather on their personal belief about when life begins. So, when anyone claims they know when the fetus becomes human, they are expressing their opinion not a scientific fact.*

*It is interesting that even the most traditional Christian beliefs include the possibility of a soul that is separate from*

*the body. This obviously comes into play at death, when the soul leaves the body. IF that can happen, why could it not also happen at birth as well. In this narrative the fetus is a developing human body, but is not fully human until the soul enters the body at some point in the pregnancy including at birth.*

*The second uniquely American narrative of the abortion debate, is the right for women to choose for themselves how their life unfolds. Even though we individuals have a responsibility to those around us, final decisions about one's body and health is one way our freedom gets expressed. For example, we have no law that forces a cancer patient into a prescribed treatment. Presently there is no law that forces a woman to have an abortion.*

*What conservative men and women seem to saying to the rest of us is that they want all American women to be governed by their beliefs. Some of this fundamentalist Christian thought stems from the fact that abortion is seen by this group as a sin against God. They believe if America allows abortion, we will lose the blessings of God. This is truly a powerful narrative, but it is a belief that only about 25% of the American population holds.*

*When you look at older generations of evangelistic Christians like the famous Billy Graham they were not opposed to a women's right to choose. This obsession with abortion is a fairly recent occurrence on the far right politically. A cause that was found to be a great fund raiser in the 1980's.*

*However, national polling shows that a majority of Americans believe that abortion must be an option for a women under certain reasonable circumstances.*



***IF** Americans don't establish a woman's right to choose as a fundamental American right once and for all, an oligarchy that is dominated by white male men will make the choice for them.*