

Hear No Evil, See No Evil

How Technology Influences the Ethics of Life Inside the Womb

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Abstract

Abortion is a very prevalent occurrence in the U.S. and for some time has even been encouraged as emergency birth control. However, many women are not educated about the life they are terminating when deciding to have an abortion. In fact, many women are even lied to in order to persuade them to have an abortion because abortion clinics are looking to profit. Technology like ultrasounds help women see, hear, and understand the physical life that is growing in them, and can help them make an informed decision. This documentary takes a closer look into how advanced technology can impact a woman's decision.

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**Introduction**

Life is under attack. Every day, women throughout the nation are lied to. Women are fed boldfaced lies about the unborn lives they have the power to change. Lies that tell them what is growing inside of them is just a clump of cells, like tissue found in any other organ. Lies that tell them it is just another part of their own bodies, like a parasitic mass they should have removed. They are told that the life growing in them is not a baby. They are told that the lump of cells in them cannot feel anything. They are not listened to, cared for, or understood. They are made to feel so desperate that they have no other options. Every day, women throughout the nation are lied to. It is time for the truth.

It is time to stop believing the lies and start listening to the truth coming from science, reason, and technology regarding life inside of the womb. Science informs us that human life, like any other animal life, begins at conception. It is in this moment that the entirety of an organism's genetic material is decided, and therefore, the start of new life. Reason tells us that there is no other logical point to the beginning of a human life other than conception. If the first breath taken marks the beginning of life, do those who rely on respirators not live? If the first detectable brainwaves show that there is life, does this mean that adults in a coma are no longer living? If we set the beginning of life to the heartbeat, what then shall we say for people with pacemakers? If the beginning of life is considered to be based on location outside of the womb, how can we morally say that a baby minutes, hours, days, or weeks from being born isn't a life, but as soon as it has

been delivered it is? Modern technology gives us a lens into life inside of the womb, lets us listen to the heartbeat and see the face of a pre-born child. So, with the combination of science, reason, and technology, we can logically conclude that life does in fact begin at conception.

Still, many do not want to admit this fact. To admit that this is life would mean admitting to murder. Instead, it is more convenient to say that the clump of cells growing in your uterus won't feel a thing, or that it doesn't at all resemble a baby, or that it isn't really wanted and therefore wouldn't have a good life. The people that encourage abortions may be doing it for the "right" reasons, to help other women through a difficult time. However, they are misguiding these women and spreading misinformation about the unborn life. This is a big issue, because if women truly have a choice, they should be properly informed on all aspects of their choice. Abortion is not something to take lightly. It is a big decision that many women feel they have to make for themselves, and unfortunately, it is encouraged by many.

Abortion clinics are in the business of death. Many ex-employees have said it themselves, their main goal is to try to get you to have an abortion. They don't make money off of referring you to an adoption agency or convincing you to keep the child. They don't make their money by providing affordable birth control. They profit from abortions. So, they say what they need to say in order to get you to make the only choice they care about. Forget the fact that life begins at conception. Forget the fact that an unborn child responds to outside stimuli earlier than 13 weeks (Johnson, 5). Forget the fact that the heart starts beating a day after being fertilized and can be seen beating as

early as 5 weeks. To them, none of that information exists because it would be inconvenient to their business. I believe that women deserve the right to know the truth.

This is why I created a documentary that looked into the ethics of abortion through the lens of science, technology, medicine, and reason. I believe that most arguments on abortion can be boiled down to one of two things, either you believe the unborn baby is alive or you do not. If we can explain and convince those who do not believe it is a life that it is, in fact, living, then we are able to really tackle the controversial nature of ending an innocent, unborn life. I have found that those who know the unborn baby is alive but still have no moral qualms on brutally ending its life are so far lost that no amount of logic, reasoning, or proof could help them. Fortunately, a large number of women who are faced with the difficult decision of abortion fall into the second category of believing that the baby is not living. This is something that we can work with to educate and help women understand the realness of the life that is in their hands. Once they understand it is a life, they have a moral conflict to come to terms with and resolve.

In order to come to the conclusion that a fetus is in fact more than a clump of tissue, but a preborn life; and that abortion is the termination of that life, one must first define the terminology of life and abortion. Because once we define that the fetus is indeed a life, and that we are forcibly ending it, we can agree that taking an innocent life is murder, and that is when the ethics of abortion can really be questioned. Once we agree that a zygote, embryo, and fetus are all living, preborn humans, the argument for being able to legally, freely end these lives becomes much more controversial.

Merriam Webster defines life in a number of ways, the first and foremost being “the quality that distinguishes a vital and functional being from a dead body.” This definition lends itself in favor of abortion, because pro-abortionists can say that a fetus is not functioning or viable until a certain point in the pregnancy. However, the other definitions given would seem to contradict the pro-abortion stance. The second definition states “a principle or force that is considered to underlie the distinctive quality of animate beings,” which would extend to the force and miracle of life inside the womb, while the third states “organismic state characterized by capacity for metabolism, growth, reaction to stimuli, and reproduction,” which would definitely include unborn babies.

Interestingly enough, Merriam Webster defines abortion as such: “the termination of a pregnancy after, accompanied by, resulting in, or closely followed by the death of the embryo or fetus.” To recognize that the death of a fetus or embryo is the result of an abortion is to recognize that the fetus or embryo was living. How can something die if it never was alive?

These definitions are helpful to have a level and accurate discussion about the sanctity of life, but I wanted to find a way to present this information to people who might not understand all of the scientific or medical terminology. I wanted to find a way to reach out to people who are not Christians, who don't necessarily believe that life is uniquely created by God. I wanted to come to their side using reason, proving that unborn life is real in a tangible, understandable way. I decided to focus on how technology impacts the moral opinion of a woman's decision on abortion.

I wanted to focus on this small portion of the abortion argument because I believe that technology helps women see, understand, and learn about the life growing inside of them, and once we can agree that it is indeed a life, we can equally discuss why ending that life is wrong. I was inspired to really focus on the technology of ultrasounds after reading *Unplanned*, a book by former Planned Parenthood director, Abby Johnson. In the book, Abby gives an account of her 8 years working with Planned Parenthood, and how she truly thought she was helping women. It was not until she aided in an ultrasound during an abortion that she saw the reality of the murder right before her eyes. Abby was appalled to watch a 13-week-old fetus unsuccessfully fight for his life during the abortion (Johnson, 5). It was then that she realized that everything she had been taught working at Planned Parenthood and everything she had told countless women was a lie. Unborn fetuses can respond to pain, they do resemble babies, they are more than just a clump of cells. Since that day Abby has made it her mission to inform and teach others about what she learned, hoping to save lives in the process.

Upon reading this, I became very interested and curious to see if viewing an ultrasound has an impact on a woman's decision to keep her child. The statistics vary quite a bit, with some pro-life organizations saying that 90% of women who are considering abortion change their mind after seeing an ultrasound image, while other pro-choice organizations say only 1.6% of women change their minds (Dockterman, Eliana) (Kertscher, Tom). This wide variety of numbers is due to inconsistent measurements and a bias coming from both sides. However, what I could gather from this is that the conclusion is still up in the air. At this point, I decided to go directly to the source and

speak with people who work with women deciding what to do with their pregnancy every day. I got in touch with the Blue Ridge Pregnancy Center, a crisis pregnancy center that offers counseling, free pregnancy tests, and free ultrasounds to women.

I spoke with the employees about if they had ever seen a woman change her mind from abortion to keeping the child after seeing an ultrasound, and many of them said they had. From them, I was also able to gain insight into “The Ultrasound Bill”. In 2012, Virginia passed a law that requires anyone seeking an abortion to first have an ultrasound (Lithwick, Dahlia). The women are not forced to view the image of the ultrasound, but they do have to have an ultrasound first. The Pro-Choice movement is up in arms about this law, claiming that it is an invasion of a woman’s body, quite ironic seeing that she is seeking to have an invasive surgery to remove her pregnancy. However, I learned at the Blue Ridge Pregnancy Center that the main purpose of this law is to actually protect women. Sometimes, a fertilized embryo does not attach itself to the walls of the uterus, but instead sits in the fallopian tubes, resulting in an ectopic pregnancy. If a woman who unknowingly has an ectopic pregnancy receives an abortion, but no one actually confirms where the fetus is, an abortionist could potentially remove the contents of the uterus without actually ending the pregnancy. This is very dangerous for women, and can lead to internal bleeding (Metz, Stephen). No fetuses can survive an ectopic pregnancy. So, the law that requires ultrasounds is actually beneficial because without an ultrasound to confirm where the pregnancy is, you can’t be sure that you have safely operated on a woman.

The Blue Ridge Pregnancy Center also connected me with two clients that they had worked with in the past. One of them came to the center 13 years ago, and another one came to the center this past year. I spoke with both of them about what it is like to go through a crisis pregnancy and why they ultimately chose life. I got to ask them what it was like to see their child through ultrasound for the first time, and although it wasn't a complete turning point for either of them, they both agreed that you cannot deny that it is a life after seeing the baby or hearing the heartbeat. Their stories were compelling, and most of the world might have said that their pregnancies were undesired, unplanned, and inconvenient, therefore abortion is the best option. However, these women bravely entered motherhood as young women in difficult relationships. They were truly an inspiration to speak with, and an encouragement that lives can be saved with support, encouragement, and education.

The final connection that the Blue Ridge Pregnancy Center afforded me was with Liberty University College of Osteopathic Medicine's Dr. John G. Pierce. Dr. Pierce has been an OBGYN for over 20 years and has extensive expert knowledge on women's health, pregnancy, abortion, and life inside the womb. From his wealth of knowledge, I learned about the progression of ultrasound and prenatal technology and how that better technology helps physicians detect problems earlier and how better images help the mother and family to see and understand what is really going on inside the womb. I was amazed to learn that today's ultrasound technology can measure an embryo just millimeters long and detect a heartbeat at 5 weeks. Many women do not even know they are pregnant until about 4 weeks along, so being able to very rapidly detect a heartbeat

and show the mother tangible, audible, and visual proof of life is essential. Ultrasound technology not only can find an embryo and detect a heartbeat but can actually see the internal development of the fetus, including seeing if the kidneys are developing correctly, if the brain is functioning, if the lungs are properly practicing how to breathe. Forty years ago, this technology was nearly unthinkable to be able to see, understand, and detect so much at such a young age. Now, it has become standard.

One thing that really encouraged me when talking to Dr. Pierce was about 3-D ultrasounds. Knowing that they are increasingly popular, I asked him about them from a medical standpoint. I was very surprised to learn that they do not give much of any medical information that a 2-D ultrasound cannot give. Instead, they cater more towards the mothers and families that can easier visualize a 3-D image over a grainy, black and white 2-D image. The whole purpose of that type of technology is to be able to better show mothers the life inside.

However, there is a major downside to the increased technology that actually could potentially harm more lives than save. With the increased ability to detect anomalies so early on, some might choose to terminate their pregnancy because of a problem that they found out early on. For instance, Iceland has proudly declared that they have eradicated Down Syndrome, when in reality they have just aborted all babies that discover have Down Syndrome before they are born. This is the same for a number of anomalies and defects.

Dr. Pierce also helped me understand that a woman's choice and especially her discussion with her doctor should be so much more than "you're pregnant, what do you

want to do?” Instead, he attested to really speaking with the women, learning their stories, taking time and care to gain trust and understanding, and then help them to talk over what they feel they have to do or what they truly want to do. He reminded me that these women need to first be listened to.

So, for my documentary, I interviewed 5 people of different backgrounds and positions. I interview Dr. Pierce, a medical professional and expert in his field, two nurses at the Blue Ridge Pregnancy Center who perform ultrasounds on women involved in crisis pregnancies every day, and two women who went through crisis pregnancies themselves and chose life. I asked them questions that pertained to their background and understanding of the topic. I learned their stories and empathized with the difficult circumstances many of them have gone through. I learned to seek authenticity in the discussion, to find something they were passionate about and ask them more about that. I sought to fit their story into my documentary, not force my documentary into their story.

Once I recorded all of their interviews, which I did individually without a crew for all but one interview, to make them more comfortable with sharing their story, I started to sort through the hours of footage that I had accumulated. From there, I picked the most influential quotes, the ones that most pertained to my topic of ultrasounds, and the ones that I found to be very moving and unexpected. It was my goal to produce an authentic, informational documentary that could be viewed by anyone whether they are Christian or Atheist, female or male, pro-life or pro-choice, and be understood. It was my hope that this documentary could start a civil discourse, break down the argument as to

whether a pregnancy is a life, and get down to the real problem, which is if it is acceptable to end an innocent life for your own benefit.

Editing became a challenge because there was so much great content that I wanted to include but only so little time that I had to include it. I was aiming for a 15-minute piece, but after careful consideration decide on an 18-minute final run time because of what I believe to be a very impactful and insightful introduction from Dr. Pierce. I included this because I feel it really set the tone for the whole documentary. I am not looking to destroy the other side, but rather start a conversation. My documentary does not give all the answers, but instead asks the questions. A viewer might watch this and reconsider, ask themselves what they really do believe about life and it's beginning. I want to spark conversation and interest in a topic that has become very important to me.

It is still unknown how many women might change their mind about having an abortion after seeing and ultrasound. It is my hope that someday, a woman considering an abortion might come across my documentary and it might spark a new idea in her mind, something that makes her reconsider. I want women to be educated and empowered when making a decision. I do not want women to feel so desperate that they have no other option but to terminate. I want women to be informed correctly. I want to combat the misinformation and lies that are circling through the media and abortion clinics.

I take joy in knowing that the recorded number of U.S. abortions a year has been steadily declining, and that this year is lower than it has been in many years (Garza, Alejandro de la). This could be due to a number of influencers, including contraceptives, legislation prohibiting abortions after a certain gestational period, or perhaps even seeing

an ultrasound, that proof of life, and knowing that they could not hurt their baby.

Whatever the reasons are, I rejoice greatly in the preserving of life and hope that this trend can increase even further in the following years.

Watch my documentary, *Hear No Evil, See No Evil* for more information on the miracle of life and how technology allows us to see, hear, and learn so much about all that is happening inside of the womb. See for yourself the incredible images of babies in utero and learn more about how major developments happen so soon. No matter your background or beliefs, there is something to learn. I believe that with education comes understanding, and with understanding, lives are truly changed.

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