

ABORTION

NOT Even When the Child Might Have a Disability?



One of the most common questions expectant parents hear is whether they are hoping for a baby girl or a baby boy. Their common response is not surprising: “As long as the baby is healthy, we’ll be happy with a boy or a girl.”

But what happens when the baby is not healthy? What is the attitude of parents whose preborn child is diagnosed with spina bifida, Down’s syndrome, or Tay-Sachs disease—a degenerative brain and nerve disease that claims the lives of most of its victims before the age of five?

Can abortion ever be a justified “treatment” for parents expecting a child with disabilities?

The Role of Prenatal Testing

Modern technology offers today’s parents the opportunity to “see” into the womb. Techniques such as amniocentesis, chorionic villi sampling (CVS) and ultrasound can all work to look at a preborn child and detect abnormalities. In many ways, these tests can be useful. *In utero* treatment may be undertaken, including fetal surgery. Special medical teams can be available at the child’s birth to ensure that delivery goes smoothly and that help is available, if needed. Parents can prepare themselves and their family

spiritually, psychologically, emotionally and financially for the birth of a child with special needs. These are all good reasons for prenatal testing.

Increasingly, however, prenatal testing is not done with these reasons in mind. It is done with the intent to “cure the disease” by killing the child. In this respect prenatal testing is wrong. Such “search and destroy” tactics are based on a eugenics mentality, which says that some human lives—those that do not meet an arbitrary standard of mental or physical health—are not worth living.

When abortion is used to solve the problem of a disability, it is discrimination of the most severe kind. These children are not merely discriminated against for their disability; they are killed because of it. Consider the suggestion of *killing* a person with Down’s syndrome in order to “cure” him. To most people, the idea is repugnant. That is exactly what happened in Germany, however, as the Nazis gained power. Preborn children diagnosed with disabilities deserve to be treated with the same respect as born people with or without a disability.

What if the Baby Will Die Anyway?

Anencephaly is a condition in which part of a baby’s brain fails to develop. Most children with anen-

cephaly die within hours or days after birth. Would abortion be acceptable in this circumstance? Quite simply, no. Abortion is direct, intentional killing. And killing is always wrong! The pro-life response in this situation is: *Always care, never kill.*

Beverly McMillan is a former abortionist who now works in the pro-life movement. As an obstetrician/gynecologist, she has seen the difference between parents who abort a severely handicapped child, and those who love a handicapped child to the end, accepting death when it comes. She has said that there is a huge difference between allowing death to come naturally and causing death—killing. Parents who know that they allowed God to have control over the life of their little baby have a much easier time grieving the loss of their baby than those parents who caused the death of their child through abortion. It is against the very nature of parents to harm their own children, and abortion is the ultimate child abuse.

Doctors Aren't Always Right

Stephanie was born with anencephaly in 1992. On October 13, 1994, Stephanie celebrated her second birthday. Her mother threw her a birthday party complete with balloons, cake, candles and hats. The doctors were wrong about how long Stephanie would live. Doctors do not make correct prognoses 100 percent of the time.

Stephanie's mother loved and cared for her. Many people, including doctors, said that Stephanie had no "quality of life." But Stephanie's mother visited her every day, and dressed her daughter in lacy dresses, shiny black patent leather shoes, and colorful hats. Perhaps it is because she was loved so much that Stephanie

lived so long. How can anyone judge someone else's quality of life? Often the fact is that those who are uncomfortable with mental or physical disabilities are really saying that their own quality of life is being affected by having to care for a disabled person or that coexisting with a person's disability makes them uncomfortable.

What some doctors see as a disability is really a priceless gift in disguise. Every human life is a gift from God, even if you have to look more closely to see it. Taking the time to care for and love a child with disabilities allows us to serve someone other than ourselves. It fosters patience, understanding and gratitude for the gifts we have been given. It allows us to experience the joy that comes from giving of ourselves and making someone else's life brighter.

Different Abilities, Different Disabilities

To one extent or another every human being is disabled. Some people struggle with math or spelling and are slower in school. Some are physically uncoordinated and have difficulty in sports. Other people have difficulty with interpersonal relationships and cannot work well with others.

No matter what the individual differences, all people share a common humanity. It is this factor that compels us to respect the lives of our brothers and sisters in the human family no matter how abled or disabled. Even more importantly, we respect the fact that every human life has been created by God to fulfill a unique and indispensable task. It is not the job of human beings to decide which people live and which people die. God is the Author of all life and these decisions are His alone!



**This information is also available as a color brochure.
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