

# Moderation: Is Pro-Choice Different Than Pro-Abortion?

Test everything; retain what is good  
--1 Thessalonians 5:21

As is the case with most of my apologetics, the inspiration I received to write this came from a personal encounter. As we were both Catholics, I felt no need to quote the Bible as to how it pertains to abortion. The relevant Bible verses have already been recited *ad infinitum* and *ad nauseum* in church. If they failed to influence my interlocutor by now, then to try it again would be insanity. That being said, I will quote some verses here for the gentle reader that demonstrate some other points I want to address -- scripture that is not normally associated with abortion.

The original discussion was with a self-proclaimed moderate who wondered why moderates always seem to be outcasts in political discussions. I gave a logical, but admittedly controversial, answer as to why, and used abortion as one of several examples as evidence to support my views. With that, my moderate interlocutor took offense at being called a liberal, saying that while she would never have an abortion herself, she felt it was not her position to tell others what to do.

I began by trying to define what a "moderate" is in reality, as well as what it means today. To assist the gentle reader in keeping the two related, but different, concepts straight, I will define "true moderate" in terms of world view, and "political moderate" in terms of the political spectrum. A true moderate is a balance of liberalism (seeking to change things) and conservatism (seeking to maintain the *status quo*). A true moderate is one who is willing to fix things that are wrong, yet also realizes that not everything is broken. The existing good ought to be protected while the existing bad should be removed and replaced with something better. This is the Christian ideal, especially as it relates to our own spiritual journey. We are truly broken creatures that God has made, yet we are still creatures that God has made. While there is much in us to fix, there are things we need to keep. The 2nd century heresy of Manichaeism (to which the Doctor of the Church Saint Augustine of Hippo once belonged) is an example of what can come from assuming liberalism must always be right. In their specific case, anything material, including our bodies, is completely evil while our spirits are completely good. Of course, the Gospels make it quite clear (and do so quite often) that assuming conservatism is always the way to go is wrong. But while Jesus had a lot to say against the Pharisees, scribes and Sadducees, He also defended the status quo (consider "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. Amen, I say to you, until Heaven and Earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place," Matthew 5:17-18). What I call a true moderate is what Jesus calls us to be, and what Saint Paul tells us to act out. We are to try to both improve ourselves (liberalism) and to cherish who we are (conservatism).

A political moderate, however, seeks to bridge the gap between the political right (currently associated with the Democratic Party in the United States) and the political left (currently associated with the Republican Party). This is a very tenuous position at best, as political debate invariably boils down to one option or another. At best, a political moderate ought to more or less side with each party equally. This flip-flopping is not conducive to building trust with either side ("I know your works; I know that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth," Revelation 3:15-16). More often, a moderate sides with one party or the other most of the time, which means they are not really a moderate after all. But most political moderates think they are defending some middle ground, and assume this middle ground must always be the ideal position. This is rarely the case (as I will soon demonstrate). Even in the rare cases where a middle ground can be found, this middle ground never attracts many votes to itself.

Regardless if middle ground is found or not, what political moderates really accomplish is deciding which extreme wins the vote.

If the nation's political climate is more or less centered on the constitution (by definition, the nation's true political center), then a true moderate and a political moderate can be the same person. But if the nation's political climate has swung one way or the other, then a true moderate and a political moderate must now be two different people. They have to be, because they are defined by two different sets of criteria, and the reality of a skewed political climate means these criteria are out of sync.

And here is where the controversial statement I made came from, something I hold as self-evident. Our country is currently (2023) horribly skewed to the political left. People who claim to support liberal ideas are supporting *radical* left ideas. People who claim to be conservative are at best supporting the center, and often a little left of center. For a political moderate to try to bridge the gap between the political right and political left is, therefore, actually supporting leftist views, as the gap they seek to bridge is always left of center.

To prove this point, I had used abortion as one of my examples of how a moderate may think she is a moderate when in fact she is pushing a leftist agenda. I explained that the only demographic in the United States whose majority is against abortion is *churchgoing* Christians. But only 20% of self-proclaimed Christians actually go to church, and the non-churchgoers push the percentage so that most Christians today support abortion (former Father Frank Pavone, in one of his "Priests for Life" e-mail articles). I had hoped this example would show that there is no middle ground on certain issues, one either supports the leftist idea of abortion or not. Why do moderates feel like outcasts despite their efforts to find common ground? It is because there is usually no common ground to find. And, as a professed Catholic, she should not pretend there is with regards to abortion. Any attempt to find this non-existent middle ground only pushes things further left in today's America. And while the far left is happy, and they smile at those who say "pro-choice," they will do so only as long as it suits their purposes. The fact that the moderates have declared their independence from the left has created a schism that the radical left will never accept long-term. Meanwhile, the conservatives are desperately trying to save lives, and nothing about "pro-choice" is helpful to them. Indeed, conservatives feel that political moderates are being condescending, treating conservatives as not "enlightened" enough to see the virtue of pro-choice. So the leftist agenda continues to be pushed further and further along, while moderates wash their hands of the ugly affair of killing children by defending the right to choose instead of promoting the actual act. This position has many parallels with Pontius Pilate in Matthew 27:24 -- "I am innocent of this man's blood. Look to it yourselves."

Despite my best efforts to be tactful here, the truth is often a bitter pill to swallow. Although my moderate interlocutor remained polite, she nonetheless proved, by her own words, everything I was trying to explain. She claimed she would never have an abortion herself, but she did not want the government to tell her how to live her life. Now, notice how this statement subtly reveals a very liberal outlook. Just because a conservative wants to save a child's life does not mean that a conservative wants women to be "enslaved." She made a *non sequitur* (does not follow) fallacy here, and attempted to deflect the conversation from abortion to fear of losing all *her* rights. I would defend her rights should it come to that, just as staunchly as I am defending the rights of the unborn now. I know of no "conservative" who would do differently, either. But while an extreme right wing authoritarian government is a legitimate concern should the political landscape of the U.S. shift too far right of center, where is the concern of an extreme *left wing* authoritarian government? A true moderate ought to be concerned about both. We are, without a doubt, closer to a leftist dictator (or "chairman," as they

like to call themselves) than we are to true political center, so being concerned of a rightist dictator seems rather absurd in our current political climate. Her irrational fear of conservatives getting too much power has made her blind to the danger of giving too much power to the liberals. Being so blinded, she does not see this, as she thinks she is taking the enlightened middle ground. She is therefore an unwitting pawn of the left. In any case, notice how she *claims* she respects the right, yet at the same time freely admits her *extreme fear* of the right.

Of course, I cannot call her a hypocrite based on this discussion alone. She may very well switch sides somewhat equally. I only know her position on this one topic. But the fact is that the irrational fear she demonstrated seems to be common among political moderates, which is why our political climate continues its march to the left. Regardless of how she feels about other matters, the fact is that the general public as a whole fears an unrealistic threat of contemporary conservatism becoming extreme, but not the imminent danger coming from contemporary liberalism. While I can't judge her as a moderate, I can judge her claim that pro-abortion is not the same as pro-choice, and I will finish my paper doing just that.

Her conclusion that there is a difference between the two is an example of what is known as the parricide fallacy. Parricide is, technically, to kill any relative. But as most such murders have specific names to describe them, the most common use is in reference to a child killing one or both parents. In regards to philosophy, if the logical *conclusion* of an argument proves a *fundamental premise* of the argument to be false, then it is a parricide fallacy. I often find this fallacy in discussions with atheists who look for apparent contradictions in the Bible to disprove God (and there are many, as my experiences with atheists will attest to). Their logic is that if the Bible is flawed, then God must be flawed. Since God cannot be flawed, God therefore cannot exist. But the Bible is only inspired if both God exists and if the Bible is the story of revelation that He wanted us to know. If either of these is false, the Bible is merely a bunch of fairy tales (and mostly sad ones at that). And, as a collection of fairy tales, it is meaningless in regards to the existence or non-existence of God. One has to disprove God *before* one can disprove the Bible, not the other way around.

In the particular case of pro-life and pro-abortion, the parricide is that pro-choice can only exist if abortion is an option. If abortion is not an option, then there is no choice to be had. The child will be born. The only way to choose to stop the birth is to abort it. Pro-choice is a merchandising technique; it needs pro-abortion to be meaningful. To deny that they are the same in good faith is being delusional. On the other hand, if one recognizes that "pro-choice" is just a way of hiding the horrors "pro-abortion" makes plain, then one is being deceitful.

And now that the usual argument against abortion has shifted, perhaps we can now look at some scripture. In Matthew 7:16, Jesus said, "by their fruits you will know them." How can we apply this seemingly unlikely scripture here? Well, what are the fruits of pro-abortion, pro-life and pro-choice? The socialist who freely promotes abortion is succeeding in killing unborn babies. U.S. taxpayer money is being used to fund "Planned Parenthood" centers, which promote abortion over all other options. If it were otherwise, then President Joe Biden (who claims to be a Catholic) would have had no reason to encourage web browsers to make it difficult for pregnant women to find Christian shelters that would help women with their children should they choose to have it. However horrible the results are, Biden and socialists are at least consistent with their stated goals and actions concerning abortion (although Biden is not consistent with his stated religious preference). And they are reaping a truly massive harvest of their "fruit": 63.4 million children died were killed in utero in fifty years time according to the National Right to Life Committee's data. This is compared to 119.7 million deaths from all causes among the born during the same period (I calculated this figure using data from the

www.mdch.state.mi.us website, and assumed that the deaths in 2022 was similar to 2021). This means that 1 out of every 3 deaths in the U.S. over the last 50 years has been a murder of an unborn child! Likewise, pro-lifers promote saving lives of unborn babies, and are donating their own time and money to help women have the baby and to care for it. Again, we see a rich harvest of "fruit" that pro-abortionists implicitly admit to, as much effort is being made by them to intimidate and marginalize the pro-lifers (consider Mark Houck as a case in point). Pro-lifers are consistent with their goals and actions, and a growing number of us are suffering for it. But what fruits can we see from "pro-choicers?"

What are their stated goals? To say it is to ensure women have a choice in having a baby or not may seem like middle-ground, but what is the middle-ground? Pro-abortionists already accept that as a goal, pro-lifers do not. Therefore, this is pro-abortion fruit. So much for pro-choicers having a unique goal that is somewhere between the two factions. But what about results?

The whole pro-choice argument means nothing to a woman who will refuse a child at all costs, nor to one who will have the child no matter what. Pro-choice only reaches out to the ones who are torn. What is causing this dilemma for them? On one side, all the problems having a child entails (according to the Guttmacher Institute's research, economics and quality of life dominate the reasons to have abortions). On the other side, some expectation that she ought to have the child regardless (societal expectations, a sense of responsibility, or moral obligations seem to be the most likely candidates, but I am unaware of any study that can verify this). I'm not trying to strawman an argument here by over-dramatizing what a pregnant woman is going through, but a pro-choicer can only impact one who is torn by a moral dilemma, regardless of the details involved in her specific case.

So, the pro-choicer has reached out (either personally or through some media) and says, "I would never do this, but what you do is your own choice." Perhaps there have been a few women who have been inspired by such a claim, and decide to keep the child based on the other woman's stoicism. I do believe that leadership by example is a legitimate method of leadership (I do question if this is truly leadership, however, but that is beyond the scope of this paper). But the fact is that the two women involved in this discussion are different people with different circumstances, and it is very easy for the pregnant woman to see advantages the pro-choicer has in her life that the pregnant woman does not have. Furthermore, it cannot be denied that the pro-choicer is also saying, "I don't care about what society or religion says, so why should you?" by implication. But this is, unfortunately, mere speculation on my part (no matter how reasonable and rational it is). But while I freely admit it is an argument from ignorance on my part, I can call the pro-choicer out on it as well. They are, after all, claiming that their moderate stance is having an equal impact on the matter. Therefore, the burden of proof that they are accomplishing what they claim they are doing is on them, not me. I have every right to be skeptical of any unsupported belief another has. But I can take this line of thought one step further, and it only gets uglier.

Guilt is important for humans, as it tells us where we need to improve our lives, and it helps us avoid making the same mistakes again. Guilt comes from believing one violated some duty one ought to have honored. The question is, on whose authority did this duty come from? To say "what you do is your own choice" claims that the authority belongs to the pregnant woman. As I mentioned before, the Biblical evidence supporting pro-life is plentiful and obvious, so I'm only going to make a single reference here: "Thou shall not kill." This is not said once, but twice in the Bible (Exodus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 5:17). The pro-choicer position appears to encourage others to place themselves over God on this matter. Even if she keeps the child, the choice was made from her wants, not God's command. If I am wrong on this conclusion, then pro-choicers need to provide a very good response

on why it is not correct. So far, I haven't heard one. "My body, my choice" is *not* a good response. Our bodies, as well as the bodies of the unborn, are *gifts* from God, not the result of some mandate God had to obey for our benefit. I realize I am assuming the pregnant woman is a Christian with my last comment, but a similar, albeit more complex, line of thought can be given should she be a skeptic. But this paper is about an experience I had with a Catholic woman, so for the sake of simplicity I am not going to explore that tangent here.

In the end, I cannot force a "moderate" of any faith to accept my definitions or arguments, but I have shown how their line of thought is problematic when it comes to abortion. It is my hope, however, that they will not only see the problems of political moderation in the so-called "pro-choice" position, but come to see similar problems in other topics they embrace as well. It is my hope that, even if they really want to be a political moderate instead of a true moderate, they will at least recognize the true (and frequently radical) leftism they are actually embracing.

All wickedness tends to destroy individuality[,] and declining natures  
assimilate as they sink.

--George MacDonald, *Alec Forbes*, Volume III, chapter 4

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