

JEN OSHMAN

# CULTURAL COUNTERFEITS



CONFRONTING 5 EMPTY  
PROMISES OF OUR AGE  
AND HOW WE WERE MADE  
FOR SO MUCH MORE

Foreword by  
CHRISTINE HOOVER

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How We Were Made for So Much More*

Jen Oshman

Foreword by Christine Hoover

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*Cultural Counterfeits: Confronting 5 Empty Promises of Our Age and How We Were Made for So Much More*

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## Abortion Has Not Delivered

“AS LONG AS THE GOVERNMENT doesn’t tell me what to do with my body,” my friend brooded. I remember the moment clearly. A group of my college girlfriends and I were gathered after lunch, shooting the breeze until our afternoon classes.

*Yeah, I thought, that’s really true. I don’t want the government controlling my body either. How scary would that be?* When the government exerts control over people’s bodies, bad things happen. *She’s right*, was the extent of my inward wrestling. To be sure, I didn’t like the idea of ending a baby’s life, but the thought of our government having tyranny over my body and my friends’ bodies seemed worse. Sometimes that hard choice would have to be made, I reasoned, in order to protect our greater freedom.

I was won over in a flash by a pithy saying. There was no competing voice in my head, no alternate sound bite for me to measure against this one. *My body, my choice* was ubiquitous in my spheres, and it took root with ease. And yes, I was a Christian at the time.

While that moment was solidifying, it was preceded by a lifetime that prepared me to embrace it. My girlfriends and I were raised to

believe that we alone would command our destinies. If we dreamed it, we would achieve it. And we would not tolerate a boyfriend or government or baby who might derail us.

### A Necessary Choice

I had seen abortion up close in high school. One lunch hour we were gathered in the school parking lot, paper Burger King sacks in hand. A carful of friends pulled up to say they wouldn't be back. They had to, you know, *take care of things*. We nodded knowingly. One passenger was pregnant and didn't want to be. The other girls were going along for moral support. Her mom knew. It was for the best, everyone agreed.

That sad, but *so normal*, scenario played out more than once amongst my peers and friends back then. We didn't question the morality of it. We didn't wonder if it was really best. We believed it was required. Motherhood at that moment was so far out, no one ever considered it a possibility.

Abortion was assumed. Sure, it was unfortunate, but that was mostly because we heard it was painful and would require a few days at home to recover. We knew our friends would be a little sad afterward. But we were sure it was necessary. And so did the 1,221,585 women and girls who received a legal abortion in 1996, the year I graduated from high school.<sup>1</sup>

### Exploitation, Not Liberation

Twenty-five years later, in May 2021, Dallas high school valedictorian Paxton Smith took the stage to address her graduating class

1 Lisa M. Koonin, M.N., M.P.H. ed., "Abortion Surveillance—United States, 1996, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, July 30, 1999, <https://www.cdc.gov/>.

and all of their loved ones who had gathered for the celebration. She pulled a speech from inside her gown and used her moment on stage to protest a newly passed law in Texas, which outlawed abortion after the detection of a fetal heartbeat.

Smith said, “I have dreams and hopes and ambitions. Every girl graduating today does. And we have spent our entire lives working towards our future. . . . I am terrified that if my contraceptives fail, I am terrified that if I am raped, then my hopes and aspirations and dreams and efforts for my future will no longer matter . . . there is a war on my body and a war on my rights. A war on the rights of your mothers, a war on the rights of your sisters, a war on the rights of your daughters.”<sup>2</sup>

Met with cheers, Smith’s message was clear: without the right to an abortion, girls’ futures are hopeless. If they cannot end unwanted pregnancies, women cannot reach their potential. Without choice, dreams and goals will go unrealized.

Her brief speech was a resounding echo of popular thinking: abortion is liberation.

But popular thinking is not necessarily right thinking. Human well-being requires harmony with reality. And what’s true is that abortion demeans, uses, and ultimately harms women. We were raised to believe it was for our good, that it would deliver us the autonomy and success we deserve, that it would truly set us free. In truth, however, abortion has done the very opposite.

Under the guise of empowerment, women have instead been made vulnerable. My college days’ conclusion was naive. I now want so much more for women. Abortion sells us way short; we will see that in the history and sociological data that follow.

2 Bill Chappell, “High School Valedictorian Swaps Speech to Speak Out against Texas’ New Abortion Law,” *National Public Radio*, June 3, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/>.



I promise, there is real hope in the final pages of this chapter. If you are a woman who has chosen abortion, please keep reading. I know many of you deeply and personally, and I've had your stories on my heart and your faces on my mind as I've written these words. Read the truth about our fallen world, the lies you and I believed, and the hope we mistakenly put in ourselves. Read the truth about the harm "choice" has inflicted on us, our children, and society as a whole. And then read with deep relief and great joy that that's not the end of your story or anyone's story. Read about our God who forgives and makes all things new. His design for us is glorious and good, so far beyond the fraud of abortion.

### **Femaleness Deemed a Liability**

The legalization of abortion is just one part of a broader cultural picture. The Sexual Revolution—while a massive and abrupt societal shift itself—was born out of a long sequence of changes that prioritized the autonomous self above communal good, as we saw in chapter 2. The advent of the birth control pill and no-fault divorce worked together to unhinge sex from the consequence of pregnancy and the context of marriage.

But here's what we take for granted today when we talk about contraception: the pill was made for women. Since its advent, contraception has been the burden of females, not males. Women ingest it; women are affected by it. It's the female body that is deemed broken, out of alignment, in need of fixing.

Whether it was for expediency or by design or subconsciously, we collectively labeled the male body normal, preferred, just fine the way it is. It was the woman's body that needed to be changed, her biology altered, not his. The cry for equality in second-wave feminism was a declaration that female physiology is a problem

and the solution is found in having a body that can function more like a man's.

How might history be different if instead in that moment we stood with our Maker and proclaimed the female body to be very good? What if, instead of suppressing what women can do, we celebrated it? What if, instead of preventing pregnancy, we protected it? What if we swapped out inconvenience for awe?

We know what actually happened, though. In the quest for unfettered sex, we began sacrificing both women and children. Rather than adjusting the male body, or better yet, our society—our values, our appetites, our threshold for legalized violence—we legalized abortion.

### **Enshrined in Law**

At the age of twenty-one, Norma McCorvey was pregnant with her third child. She wanted an abortion, but it was not legal in Texas in 1969 unless it was to save the life of the mother. After seeking an illegal abortion at an unlawful clinic and finding that it had recently shut down, she began working with an adoption attorney to prepare for the birth of her child. Incidentally, her attorney connected her to a lawyer who was preparing to challenge Texas abortion law.

McCorvey was given the alias of Jane Roe (the Roe in *Roe v. Wade*), and a suit was filed in her name against Dallas County District Attorney Henry Wade (the Wade in *Roe v. Wade*). McCorvey never appeared in court, never testified, and didn't necessarily want abortion to be widely legalized—she just wanted one herself.

Ultimately, on January 23, 1973, the Supreme Court issued a 7–2 decision in favor of Jane Roe, legalizing abortion across the nation. The justices determined that women have a fundamental right to choose to end their own pregnancies, without excessive government

restriction. They reasoned that outlawing abortion infringed upon a pregnant woman's right to privacy, because of the distress and difficulties associated with an unwanted or unplanned child.

In the duration of the case, McCorvey delivered her baby and placed him or her for adoption. She never did have an abortion.

In a surprising and widely unknown turn of events, after working in an abortion clinic and witnessing firsthand for the first time its impact on women, McCorvey rejected the abortion rights movement and went to work in a pro-life pregnancy resource center instead. In 2005, before the Senate Judiciary Committee she provided this testimony:

I believe that I was used and abused by the court system in America. Instead of helping women in *Roe v. Wade*, I brought destruction to me and millions of women throughout the nation. . . . Instead of getting me financial or vocational help, instead of helping me to get off of drugs and alcohol, instead of working for open adoption or giving me other help, my lawyers . . . were looking for a young, white woman to be a guinea pig for a great new social experiment. . . . Do you have any idea how much emotional grief I have experienced? It is like a living hell knowing that you have had a part to play, though in some sense I was just a pawn of the legal system.<sup>3</sup>

### **Are Unborn Babies Persons?**

At the heart of the *Roe v. Wade* decision was a prevailing, albeit likely subconscious, society-wide assumption that we define ourselves. We have increasingly believed over the last century that our identity, our reality, who we really are, is self-invented and self-realized. In

3 Norma McCorvey, "Testimony of Norma McCorvey," June 23, 2005, <https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/McCorvey%20Testimony%20062305.pdf>.

1973 women gained the right to abort because they did not define themselves as mothers.

Never mind that the babies existed. Never mind that the women were actually pregnant. Feelings, not facts, would shape reality.

The majority opinion, written by Justice Harry Blackmun, says “The word ‘person,’ as used in the Fourteenth Amendment, does not include the unborn. . . . If the suggestion of personhood is established . . . the fetus’ right to life would then be guaranteed.”<sup>4</sup> Unborn babies, he reasoned, might be humans, but they are not persons because they have no ability to self-define. Breathing in and breathing out the cultural air of the day, the Supreme Court ruled that a person is someone who defines his or her own existence. To be a person, one must be able to *think* not just to *be*.<sup>5</sup>

### Dualism: Body and Mind

It follows from this worldview, then, that an abortion is an act of the body and bears no consequence on the mind. We think there should be no mental or emotional fallout from an abortion because we are not our bodies. And further, we can end an unborn life without any ill effects, because it’s just a human, not a person. It isn’t harmful because aborted fetuses are just bodies.

This philosophy of personhood has real consequences. To date, over 60 million women in America have made a choice about who they want to be and inflicted that choice on their own bodies and their babies’ bodies.<sup>6</sup> Abortion clinic counselors tell women every day that abortion is a good option. They say it’s safe, it’s not too

4 Roe v. Wade, 410 U.S. 113 (1973).

5 I am indebted to author and philosopher Nancy Pearcey who gives this dualism thorough treatment in her book *Love Thy Body* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2018).

6 “Reported Annual Abortions 1973–2017,” National Right to Life Educational Foundation, 2018, <https://nrlc.org/uploads/factsheets/FS01AbortionintheUS.pdf>.

painful, it's emotionally less damaging than birthing the baby. Women with unplanned pregnancies are convinced the physical act will not hurt their immaterial hearts and souls.

But what has been lauded as an empowering choice since 1973 has proven to be a devastating regret. The victims of abortion are not just the children. They are also the mothers who believe the abortion counselors, their partners and friends and family, and a culture that says, *You have to do this. It's for the best. It's not a person anyway. You can eliminate this mistake and move on with your life like it never happened. You can employ and celebrate choice to determine your destiny.*

### Abortion: The Data

A half century after its legalization, we must finally and fully admit that abortion is a cultural counterfeit, an empty promise. What follows is not an exhaustive account of all the ill effects of abortion, but hopefully it's an enlightening one. I'll warn you now that it's likely to be a disheartening read. As a people we are not generally open and honest about the dismal realities of abortion. This is heavy stuff.

So here's what we must remember: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5). We have to be honest and real about what's dark, so that light might shine. Jesus is the light of the world. He is victorious and alive. He is the giver of life. Even the darkness of abortion cannot overcome him.

My desire is that women would know more than pithy sound bites and stand ready with the truth so that we might offer real hope to ourselves, our sisters, our girlfriends, our daughters, and any stranger on the street who doesn't know what to do with the unplanned child in her womb.

*Abortion debases genuine feminism.* Nobody inside the movement says that abortion destroys "just a clump of cells" anymore.

Bioethicists, doctors, counselors, and activists all know that an embryo is an actual baby. One Feminist for Life said that to link feminism with abortion is to create “terrorist feminism” because it forces the feminist to be “willing to kill for the cause you believe in.”<sup>7</sup> Whereas the original feminists protected women and children, were antislavery activists, social reformers, and suffragists, second-wave feminism cannot be separated from killing.

*Most women feel pressured into abortion, unprepared for it, and guilty about it.* One study reveals the following about post-abortive women in America:<sup>8</sup>

- More than 90 percent said they weren’t given enough information to make an informed choice.
- More than 80 percent said they probably would not have aborted if they hadn’t been so heavily encouraged to do so.
- Eighty-three percent said they would have carried to term if they had had more support in their lives.

*Abortion greatly increases women’s mental health risks.* A *British Journal of Psychiatry* study found that abortion causes:<sup>9</sup>

- 81 percent increase in risk of mental health conditions;
- 34 percent increase in risk of anxiety;

7 Randy Alcorn, “It Is Possible to Be a Feminist and Be Pro-life,” *Eternal Perspective Ministries* (blog), June 11, 2018, <https://www.epm.org/blog/>.

8 “Key Facts about Abortion,” Elliot Institute, n.d., [www.afterabortion.org](http://www.afterabortion.org), as quoted in Randy Alcorn, *Why Pro-Life?: Caring for the Unborn and Their Mothers* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2012), 77.

9 Priscilla K. Coleman, “Abortion and Mental Health: Quantitative Synthesis and Analysis of Research Published 1995–2009,” Cambridge University Press, January 2, 2018, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/>.

- 37 percent increase in risk of depression;
- 110 percent increase in risk of alcohol use;
- 155 percent increase in risk of suicide.

*Women seek abortions for reasons that might be alleviated with other social services and supports.* According to Care Net, an umbrella organization for thousands of pregnancy resource centers, women are abortion-minded for the following reasons:<sup>10</sup>

- financial (40 percent)
- timing (36 percent)
- partner-related reasons (31 percent)
- the need to focus on other children (29 percent)
- multiple reasons (64 percent)
- a recent traumatic event such as unemployment, a breakup, or falling behind on rent or mortgage (57 percent)
- a physical problem with their health (12 percent)
- rape (1 percent)
- incest (<0.5 percent)

*Abortion has a racist past and a racist present.* Margaret Sanger founded Planned Parenthood and championed birth control in the early 1900s. Sanger's motives were racist and rooted in the eugenics movement, whose motto was, "More from the fit, less from the unfit." While I am confident that the majority of Planned Parenthood employees are not now intentionally racist, current abortion numbers as related to race should cause a public outcry.

<sup>10</sup> Care Net, "Facts on Abortion," 2019, [https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/367552/Downloads/Top\\_40\\_Abortion\\_Statistics.pdf](https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/367552/Downloads/Top_40_Abortion_Statistics.pdf).

Abortion is responsible for 61 percent of black American deaths, and 64 percent of Hispanic/Latino deaths.<sup>11</sup> While black Americans make up only 13 percent of the US population, black women account for 36 percent of all abortions.<sup>12</sup> These gross imbalances should give every American pause. Why do we allow abortion providers to prey on women of color?

Let me be very clear: these statistics are not because black or Hispanic/Latino women are more selfish or more violent. It's because they, like all of us, have been shaped by a culture and a context that says abortion is better for you than a baby. For women with fewer resources, as minority women in the United States often are, abortion often feels like the only way forward.

We *all* need to be asking ourselves what we're doing to equip women in need. How can we join women on the margins of society so that abortion does not feel like their best option?

### At-Home Abortions

The overall number of abortions in the United States is in decline, which is likely due to an increase in contraception use, the Sex Recession discussed in chapter 5, and the underreporting of at-home abortions (discussed below). The most recent year for which United States abortion statistics are available (2017) reveals that the lives of 862,000 babies were ended in that year alone.<sup>13</sup> This “reduced” number is still tragic and does not include a comprehensive count

11 Danny David, “Study: Abortion Is the Leading Cause of Death in America,” *Live Action News*, August 11, 2016, <https://www.liveaction.org/news/unc-study-demonstrates-effect-of-abortion-on-minorities-and-public-health/>.

12 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Abortion Surveillance — United States, 2014,” November 24, 2017, <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/ss/ss6624a1.htm>.

13 “Induced Abortion in the United States, Fact Sheet,” Guttmacher Institute, September 2019, <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-united-states>.



of medication-induced abortions, which are increasingly routine but hard to track.

The increasing availability of abortions at home makes confronting the counterfeit of abortion feel more urgent than ever. Abortion by medication is currently available to women through abortion clinics, their doctors, and the mail via telemedicine or an internet order. In 2023, by law, public university campus clinics in California will begin offering medication-induced abortions to their students (the morning-after pill, which is different than a medication abortion, is already available in vending machines on campuses across the country).

A woman who ends her pregnancy by medication first ingests a pill containing mifepristone to deplete her body of progesterone, which is needed to support a pregnancy. The following day the woman takes a pill containing misoprostol, which induces miscarriage. The seeming ease and anonymity have made the process attractive, but it remains very dangerous. Women experience cramping (oftentimes extreme and debilitating), hemorrhaging, and the delivery of a dead baby. Although Planned Parenthood pressures women to ingest the first pill before they leave their offices, all of this can happen in the privacy of their own home (or maybe the not-so-private dormitory bathroom), which means women and girls are further isolated and at risk both physically and emotionally with these so-called self-managed abortions. Allowing a woman to endure such risk and trauma alone should be unthinkable. In what other sphere of medicine is this even imaginable?

Women and their babies deserve so much more.

### **Created to Be Subcreators**

Abortion, we're told, is a choice. Who doesn't love choice? But this choice is different. Choosing to snuff out a life in the womb puts

us in the seat of the Sovereign, a position we cannot handle. Our hearts are not meant to bear the weight of deciding who gets to live and who has to die. It breaks us when we do.

It is plain to see that the female body is meant to bring forth and nurture life, not end it. We have a womb. We have mammary glands. We are born carrying eggs. Our bodies proclaim that we are to reproduce, to nurture and nourish children. It's not the sum total of the female purpose, but it's undeniable that we are life-givers by design.

Bringing new life into the world is a shockingly marvelous gift. It's awe-inspiring. Women have a huge privilege in being subcreators with God.<sup>14</sup> Our bodies are not liabilities. The female body is glorious and good and worth protecting and cherishing.

Abortion, therefore, inflicts a primal wound. While proponents laud the procedure as a quick fix and simple solution, the reality is that it impacts not only our bodies but our hearts and souls as well. To kill the child inside us does violence to our composition as women. It contradicts reality; it goes against our very nature.

Abortion *demand*s life, but we are meant to *give* life. We will never be okay aborting a baby, because we were made in the image of a God who gave his own life for our sake. When we image him, we sacrifice ourselves for others, and we thrive.

## **We All Bear the Blame**

Abortion is a heartbreaking reality that never had to be. I'm moved to tears as I think of many dear friends and the numerous women I've counseled who chose abortion because they thought they had to.

<sup>14</sup> Timothy Keller, *On Birth* (New York City: Penguin, 2020), 7.

We must acknowledge that we as a people have made murder appear more appealing than motherhood. *The blame for abortion lies with all of us.*

Abortion has served as a quick fix for a society that pursues sex without consequence and prioritizes the male body and function above the female. Rather than conforming societal values and expectations to the good and awe-inspiring design of women and what we contribute to society through fertility and reproduction, we have instead been asked and convinced to sacrifice ourselves and our babies.

We've settled, advocated even, for this messed-up way of life. And there have been way too many victims. So how do we move forward? How does a post-abortive woman move past her regret and trauma? How do we all forge a new normal for women and girls?

### **Abortion Is Not Unforgivable**

The wounds endured by a post-abortive woman are unlike any other. As described in the statistics above, they are soul-deep and cause seemingly insurmountable shame and regret. The father of lies (John 8:44), Satan, whispers to women that abortion is unforgivable, but that's not true.

Our God stands ready and eager to forgive and to free.

A post-abortive woman must first acknowledge the choice she made. While it's true that many others are culpable, a post-abortive woman cannot move forward unless she is honest with herself and her God. The apostle Paul says, "Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death" (2 Cor. 7:10). Worldly grief keeps a woman in bondage; it produces death because it is not honest, contrite, or broken before God. But godly grief owns sin, acknowledges

wrongdoing, and lays it all before the Lord for his forgiveness and healing.

The sin of abortion was paid for, once and for all, on the cross. Do not believe the lie that Jesus's death was not payment enough.

The truth is, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). If you confess your role in abortion, Jesus will not only forgive you, but *cleanse* you.

The Bible says, "As high as the heavens are above the earth, / so great is [God's] steadfast love toward those who fear him; / as far as the east is from the west, / so far does he remove our transgressions from us" (Ps. 103:11–12). As you and I fear the Lord—as we revere him, acknowledge his holiness and our sin—*all* of our transgressions will be removed from us forever.

Experiencing the peace that comes from God's complete forgiveness is rarely a one-and-done event. Christ-centered counseling and post-abortion support groups are invaluable. Many women find it healing to share their stories and to provide care to pregnant women in crisis at pregnancy resource centers.

The very good and final news for post-abortive women is this: "If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36). No matter the sin, no one can take away the forgiveness bought for us at the cross of Christ. Further, no one can take the freedom wrought in his resurrection. Because Jesus lives, we will too (John 14:19).

### **Do You Really Want to be Inclusive?**

Author and philosopher Nancy Pearcey says, "The pro-choice position is exclusive. It says that some people don't measure up. They don't make the cut. They don't qualify for the rights of personhood.

[But] the pro-life position is inclusive. If you are a member of the human race, you're 'in.'"<sup>15</sup>

You're in. I'm in. Every man, woman, and child is in. Every life is a treasure to protect.

While it's true that over 60 million babies have been aborted in the United States since 1973, with a move of God's Spirit amongst his people, this can become a reflection of history rather than a forecast of the future. There are currently over 2,700 pregnancy resource centers in the United States,<sup>16</sup> while there are only around eight hundred abortion clinics.<sup>17</sup>

I have served in a few pregnancy resource centers and have sat across from women as they've weighed their options. They each have a unique story, but so many are vulnerable because they lack an education, a job, a supportive partner, a healthy homelife. Many women face real danger, abuse, and shame at home. Providing resources and care can make all the difference. Walking them through steps such as finding a Medicaid-approved doctor, getting help with groceries, getting matched with a mentoring mom, and more can make the difference between life and death.

What if, with God's help, we took him seriously? What if, with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, we the church laid ourselves down for others? What if we took the tangible goodness of our God to women in need? What if we pursued life and the well-being of others with such tenacity that abortion became unnecessary, unthinkable even?

The pro-life community must come to realize that this is not an "us versus them" situation. *They* are *us*. As humans we are in this

15 Nancy Pearcey, *Love Thy Body* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2018), 64.

16 Nicole Stacy, "Pro-life Pregnancy Centers Served 2 Million People, Saved Communities \$161M in 2017," Charlotte Lozier Institute, September 5, 2018, <https://lozierinstitute.org/>.

17 "Data Center," Guttmacher Institute, accessed April 20, 2020, <https://data.guttmacher.org/states/table?state=US&topics=57&dataset=data>.

together. How can we all choose life together, so that our children may live (Deut. 30:19)?

This is the biblical worldview, which is truly inclusive, in action.

## Going Home

In 2020 FX debuted a documentary on the life of Norma McCorvey, called *AKA Jane Roe*. Filmmaker Nicholas Sweeney says McCorvey reached out to him to make a deathbed confession. She wanted the world to know before she died that her pro-life work was a fraud. In the film she says, “I think it was a mutual thing. You know, I took their money, and they put me out in front of the cameras and told me what to say.”<sup>18</sup>

Critics of the film say Sweeney didn’t press McCorvey enough to uncover what’s true. Many conclude that the real Norma McCorvey was never revealed, that her own words were unconvincing. Perhaps she herself never felt at peace in the pro-choice movement *or* the pro-life movement and was always treated as a pawn. She always wanted to be an actress, she told Sweeney.

It’s devastating to realize that Jane Roe was most likely played first by abortion activists and then perhaps by pro-life activists too. Maybe she liked the spotlight or maybe she just didn’t know better how to navigate her own life. Either way, she’s now an emblem of the greater exploitation of women and girls during her lifetime. Either way, her tragic legacy confirms for us that without a firm foundation and a supportive community, vulnerable women and girls are likely to be used by the world around them.

<sup>18</sup> Alisa Chang, “New FX Documentary Explores Life of the Woman Behind Roe v. Wade Decision,” “All Things Considered,” National Public Radio, May 22, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/>.

This was true for my friends in high school, as they were used by the boys they slept with, the pop culture that shaped them, and the Planned Parenthood clinic that provided their abortions for a few hundred bucks. And this was the case for myself and my college girlfriends, as we were easily used by a social movement, our allegiance purchased with a cheap and thoughtless *my body, my choice*.

Abortion is the deadliest empty promise of our age.

Just like the reckless living the Prodigal pursued in a far country, abortion promises life, satisfaction, and real fulfillment. Instead, it delivers death, regret, and myriad wounds, physical and otherwise.

May we all come to our senses and return to the Father's warm, forgiving, and enduring embrace. May we actively and persistently push back the culture of death in our midst. Our good God is a resurrection God. His specialty is bringing life from death. This is what he does! May he do it here and now. May we choose life.

Maybe you yourself had an abortion (or maybe more than one), or maybe you encouraged your friend or daughter to get one, or maybe you've just avoided the issue altogether and lulled yourself into complacency thinking this isn't your problem. Whatever role you have played in the counterfeit of abortion, know this: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1). Do not let the enemy steal the joy of your salvation, the lightheartedness of your freedom, the peace and hope you have for all eternity. He is not welcome here. You were made for so much more. Our God reigns.

## Discussion Questions

1. Start with an awareness that one in four American women has an abortion. There are likely some women in your group who have

endured the trauma of abortion. Proceed through this discussion with care and concern for their perspective.

2. Whether it was for expediency or by design or subconsciously, the Sexual Revolution labeled the male body normal and made birth control for females. How might your life, your mother's life, or others' lives be different if, instead of suppressing pregnancy, we celebrated it? What if efforts used to create birth control and abortion were instead navigated toward creative means of adjusting both the public and private spheres for new life?
3. Fetuses were determined by the Supreme Court not to be persons back in 1973. Our culture says that to be a person one must be able to define oneself. How pervasive is this thinking? How dangerous is it? What do you think defines a person?
4. Under the section "Abortion: The Data" there are six subsections. Which data are the most surprising to you? Why do you think much of this research remains undisclosed or unpopular to the public?
5. Do you agree or disagree that we all bear the blame for abortion? What is your plan to help reduce the number of abortions in your community?
6. Many post-abortive women believe their abortions are unforgivable, but this is a lie. Read Psalm 104; Romans 8:1; 2 Corinthians 7:10; John 8:36; 14:19; and 1 John 1:9. Encourage one another with these truths of Scripture and close by praying and thanking God that he is relentlessly forgiving and can bring life from death.