

Legislating Morality

Joe Slater

So popular is the slogan that you would think it was engraved in stone somewhere: **"You can't legislate morality!"** Gambling, pornography, beverage alcohol, and other vices enjoy legal protection because gullible people have subscribed to that misleading motto.

Upwards of sixty million human babies have perished in America since January 22, 1973, when the Supreme Court enshrined abortion (a moral abomination) as a Constitutional right. How could this happen? Millions of citizens who ought to have known better remained silent. After all, "you can't legislate morality." So we let it happen. By our silence, we gave consent. Shame on us!

Of course you can legislate morality! Every law in existence has some moral basis. The real question is: "What morality shall be legislated? Shall it be Biblical, or shall it be Humanistic?"

Laws against murder, theft, assault, etc. legislate morality. People still murder each other, steal from each other, and assault each other. But we do not fault the laws, nor do we demand that they be removed from the books or cease to be enforced.

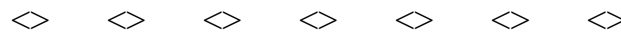
Would outlawing abortion end the killing? No, not entirely – but certainly the numbers would fall dramatically.

Some Christians argue that we should not seek to change the law, but only to change people's hearts. I submit that we should do both. Ideally, everyone's heart would be filled with the love and compassion of Jesus; abortions would cease instantly. Realistically, however, the Savior told us that most will choose the broad, easy

way that leads to destruction; only a few will find the difficult, narrow way (Matthew 7:13, 14). So, while we seek the minority whose hearts are open to the gospel, should we ignore the dreadful atrocities perpetrated by the ungodly? No, indeed! We can and should use God-ordained civil government to protect the helpless against the heartless (Romans 13:3, 4).

This has nothing to do with party politics, nor are we breaching the so-called "wall of separation between church and state." Abortion is a defining moral and spiritual issue of our time. Perhaps silence is golden in regard to some other matters; in this case, however, it is sinful.

May God hasten the day when the gross immorality of abortion will be condemned by the law rather than shielded by it!



Before It Is Too Late

*If you have a tender message
Or a loving word to say,
Do not wait till you forget it,
But whisper it today.
The tender word unspoken,
The letter never sent,
The long-forgotten messages,
The wealth of love unspent –
For these some hearts are breaking,
For these some loved ones wait;
So show them that you care for them
Before it is too late.*

--Frank Herbert Sweet

Open-Mindedness

Hear what the psalmist said: *"The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple"* (Psalm 19:7).

Don't let the word "simple" throw you. We have corrupted that word until, as frequently used, it means something not much better than half-witted, and that is not at all what the psalmist had in mind. Moffat's rendering, "that instructs the open-minded," has much to commend it. We recall the old phrase, "There is none so blind as he who will not see." The proud man trusts his own mind, and Solomon calls that man a fool (Proverbs 28:26). The humble man opens his mind to receive the word of God, and his soul is revived.

God instructs the simple-minded. That ought to be obvious. What other class of people could the Eternal possibly instruct than the open-minded? No others are teachable. Man, in his pride, proclaims, "There is no God." The apostle Paul has a few words for such closed-minded people. *"Let no one deceive himself, if any one among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool, that he may become wise"* (1 Corinthians 3:18).

Unfortunately, it seems that many minds are hermetically sealed when it comes to God and religion. Almost a century ago, Thomas Hardy looked at the attitude of Byron and Swinburne and observed that they were "nothing but naughty boys peeking around the church door and making faces at the parson." Such behavior remains with us to this day.

Are we open and receptive? James says, *"Therefore put away all filthiness and rank growth of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word which is able to save your soul"* (1:21).

Nor should we forget the words of Jesus: *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"* (Matthew 5:3).

--John Gipson (Little Rock, AR) via Buchanan Dam, TX