

Disability, the Sanctity of Life, and the Church

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The story about these notes...

- Rather than content-driven, except for the action steps at the end, these notes will be citation-guided, so that you can look at the statistics, stories, and verses for yourself.
- “but test everything; hold fast what is good.”
1 Thessalonians 5:21
- “Now these Jews [in Berea] were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.” Acts 17:11

The story from New York...

- In January 2011, church leaders, political leaders, and media representatives met together to discuss statistics showing that in 2009:
 - ▣ 40.7% of pregnancies in NYC ended in abortion
 - ▣ For every two children born to black mothers, three were aborted
 - ▣ More than half of babies were aborted whose mothers were single, black, or under the age of 25.

The story from New York (in pictures)...

{photo credit: thatsabortion.com,
also various news sites & blogs}



The story from New York...

- Link for the statistics:

- ▣ Summary for Vital Statistics, 2009; New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

- ▣ Found at

- <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/vs/2009sum.pdf>

- Link for the news story:

- ▣ New York Times, 1/6/2011, *Religious Leaders Call for New Efforts to Lower the City's 'Chilling' Abortion Rate*

- ▣ Found at

- http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/07/nyregion/07abortion.html?_r=3&scp=5&sq=abortion&st=cse

The story of those yet unborn with disabilities...

- ❑ 92% of parents who find out prenatally that their unborn child has Down syndrome choose to abort.
- ❑ Population projections indicate that we should have had 42% more people with Down syndrome in 2006 than in 1989 but instead had 11% less, due to abortion.
- ❑ Breakthroughs in medical testing are making it easier to diagnose disabilities before birth.

The story of those yet unborn with disabilities...

- Source for 92% abortion rate of babies diagnosed prenatally with Down syndrome:
 - Mansfield, C., Hopfer, S., & Marteau, T. (1999). Termination rates after prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome, spina bifida, anencephaly, and Turner and Klinefelter syndromes: A systematic literature review. *Prenatal Diagnosis*. 19; 808-812.
- Source for population decrease in Down syndrome:
 - USA Today, 6/9/2011, Comfort or Conflict: Earlier Down syndrome test
<http://yourlife.usatoday.com/health/medical/story/2011/06/Comfort-or-conflict-Earlier-Down-syndrome-test/48245074/1>
- Too many sources to list about breaking news on prenatal disability testing; just do a Google new search and email me if you can't find what I'm talking about.

The story of you...

- You might not agree that abortion is wrong or that the church ought to be meddling in what you consider to be a personal or political matter. I will address those concerns near the end.
- You might have had or been involved in an abortion. Estimates indicate that 1 in 3 women will have an abortion during their child-bearing years*. Jesus took the penalty for *all* sin on the cross, and he offers forgiveness to you today. *“There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:1)*

*see http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.html and <http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1843717,00.html>

Stories from the world...

- We're not sharing these because we ought to be reactionary, but because ***if the church is silent on this matter***, these are the only stories that will be told and heard.

Stories from the world...

- The story of three-year-old Bryan, who was born with one leg and no arms...
- ...and whose parents successfully sued medical professionals because they didn't get a chance to abort him
- Source: The Palm Beach Post News,
<http://www.palmbeachpost.com/news/family-seeks-millions-from-obstetrician-ultrasound-clinics-after-1808830.html> and
<http://www.palmbeachpost.com/news/jury-awards-west-palm-beach-parents-of-child-1831553.html>

Stories from the world...

- The story of Pat Robertson publically stating, in response to a question posed to him, that a man could divorce his wife who had Alzheimer disease because she was “not there” anymore
- Source: The New York Times,
<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/17/us/pat-robertson-remarks-on-alzheimers-stir-passions.html>

Stories from the world...

- The story of a doctor in Sarasota, FL, who lost his medical license for aborting the non-disabled twin instead of the one with Down syndrome
- Source: CBS News,
<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2010/04/13/health/main6391370.shtml>

Stories from the world...

- The story of Baby Doe, who was born with Down syndrome and an incomplete esophagus whose parents withheld treatment, leading to starvation, because they didn't want a child with Down syndrome
- Source: Time, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,949828,00.html> and John Piper, <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/taste-see-articles/abortion-fathers-day-and-infant-doe>

Stories from the world...

- ❑ The story of Gerhard Herbert Kretschmar, who was born blind, missing both arms, and missing one or both legs, and whose parents wanted him euthanized but the doctor said no...
- ❑ ...so they appealed to a political leader named Adolf Hitler, and Gerhard was the first person killed by official order of Hitler
- ❑ Source: *Karl Brant: The Nazi Doctor; Medicine and Power in the Third Reich*, Ulf Schmidt, p. 117-123

God's story of life...

- It's about God.
- First, see Genesis 1 and 2.

Psalm 139:13-14

For you formed my
inward parts, you knitted me
together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and
wonderfully made. Wonderful
are your works; my soul
knows it very well.

God's story of life...

- *Exodus 21:22-25*: strict punishment for the assault of a pregnant woman that results in injury or death to her unborn child
- *Leviticus, the prophets*: the practice of infant and child sacrifice is decried
- *Jeremiah 1:5*: He was consecrated by God as a prophet before birth.

God's story of life...

- God fashions us in the womb (*Psalms 139:13-14; Job 10:9-12, 31:15*)
- The blessing and importance of children is made clear in *Psalms 125:3-5, Matthew 18:5-6, and Mark 9:36-37*.
- God's design in science demonstrates this as well, with a unique organism at the moment of conception which will typically grow from a pre-born to a born baby without interference.

Exodus 4:11

Then the Lord said
to him, "Who has made man's
mouth? Who makes him mute,
or deaf, or seeing, or blind?

Is it not I, the Lord?"

God's story about disability...

- *Exodus 4:11* – He is sovereign over it.
- *John 9:3* – The works of God can be displayed in disability.
- *Romans 8:28* – God has a good design and purpose for the good of his people who love him and are called according to his purpose.

God's story about murder...

- *James 4:2* – You desire and do not have, so you murder.

God's story in the Knight family

- John Knight writes the blog The Works of God. His son has multiple, severe disabilities, and his wife has breast cancer. And he writes...

"God does not abandon us. And not only are we not alone, but God has promised to supply every need (Phil 4:19), that his plan is to benefit us (Jer 29:11), Jesus himself will send a helper (John 14:16-17), God will comfort us (Ps 71:20-21), and he has given us other people to encourage us (1 Thes 5:11)."

John Knight

Our story as the church...

- Hebrews 10:32-35
- Luke 10

Our story as the church...

□ What can we do?

1. Pray.
2. Support alternatives to abortion.
3. Use your rights of free speech, representation, and demonstration.
4. Be willing to teach and preach about this topic.

Our story as the church...

□ What can we do?

5. Show the love and grace we received from Christ with others, including those who have had abortions and those who are experiencing difficulties as parents of children with disabilities.
6. Support and serve in disability ministry.

Our story as the church...



- Psalm 78, including *those yet unborn*

Thanks for joining me!

For more on this topic, see:

My session notes at inclusionfusion.org

My blog at TheWorksofGodDisplayed.com

John Knight's blog at TheWorksofGod.com

Or email me at [shannon@
theworksofgod
displayed.com](mailto:shannon@theworksofgoddisplayed.com)

And one last thing...

- My story includes that I am *not perfect*, so please note that I made a couple of mistakes in the video. I'm sure you're smart enough to have figured out what I meant, but to avoid confusion:
 1. When talking about Baby Doe, I said the courts "withheld the parents' decision" and it should have been "upheld."
 2. When talking about the case in 2010 when the doctor lost his license, I said at one point ""by aborting a child without a disability" instead of "with a disability."
 3. When reading the John Knight quote, I accidentally said Psalm 17 instead of 71. The text on the screen and in these notes is correct.
 4. At the end, I made a comment about "serving alongside those yet unborn" each week. I meant "alongside those who were born."

Please let me know if you have any questions!