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What Does it Mean to be Pro-Life?

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What Does it Mean to be Pro-Life?

Abstract

"For me, being pro-life means being pro-adoption, pro-foster care, and pro-social programs."

Posting about the many dimensions of a pro-life stance from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/what-does-it-mean-to-be-pro-life/>

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Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service](#) at Dordt College.

What Does it Mean to be Pro-Life?

 [all in allthings.org/what-does-it-mean-to-be-pro-life/](https://allinallthings.org/what-does-it-mean-to-be-pro-life/)

Erin Olson

For as long as I can remember, a dichotomy has existed when it comes to someone's position on abortion. You can either identify yourself as being pro-life or pro-choice. By putting yourself in one of these silos, you let others know whether you support or oppose abortion. No one is usually afforded a third option—you are either for or against abortion. Pro-life always means anti-abortion, but what if this isn't all that it could mean for our Christian communities? What might it mean for Christians to be truly *pro-life*?

For me, as a mother, being pro-life means much more than just opposing abortion. In fact, opposition to abortion is usually one of the last things I use to describe my pro-life stance. For me, being pro-life means being pro-adoption, pro-foster care, and pro-social programs. Life is more than just birth, as you and I well know. As a mother, my job as a parent didn't end once I helped bring my children into the world — that's really when the job began. My kids have many needs that must be met every day and as they become older and more independent, their needs seem to become more complicated. Ensuring their needs are met is one of the most challenging responsibilities I have. And, thankfully, I have help in meeting their needs — a husband who co-parents with me, help from my parents and in-laws, a loving and caring community, and also a supportive church congregation.

Current estimates state that close to 1 in 4 kids in the United States of America live in poverty (National Center for Children in Poverty, 2014) and this number goes up to close to 1 in 2 kids if you use a slightly different measurement tool. This should be a startling statistic for us both as Americans and as Christians. In one of the wealthiest nations in the world, how is that so many kids are poor? For me, being pro-life means that I am concerned about the living conditions of children in this country (and around the world, for that matter). And while there is no quick-and-easy solution to fix poverty, being pro-life means we should be having conversations about how to get kids and families out of poverty.

Poverty often means a lack of access to food, safe and clean housing, quality education, and healthcare. Governmental assistance programs such as WIC (Women, Infants, & Children), SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as Food Stamps), Medicaid (healthcare for the poor), and TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) have been developed to help families in times of need. In spite of some misuse, these programs provide a basic social safety net around children and families. These programs, along with the services provided by smaller, local social service organizations (both faith-based and non-faith-based) can also help to provide a basic standard of living for all people to ensure their basic needs are met.

While governmental programs are needed to provide a basic safety net, I believe the church community is also called to provide for the needs of people not only within the congregation, but also for people outside of the church community. The Bible is chock full of verses calling us to care for those in need. 1 John 3:17-18 says, *"If any one of you has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in you? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth."* James 2:14-17 says, *"What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if people claim to have faith but have no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."*

As Christians, we are called to demonstrate our faith and love to others by ensuring their physical,

emotional, and safety needs are met. If we are truly pro-life, we should be concerned about the quality of life people are living, and through relationships with people in our community, we can work toward providing tangible help to those who are in need. Here are some ways you can do this:

- Become a foster parent or provide respite care. This typically requires completing a training program and becoming certified, but providing care for kids in foster care can be a powerful way to demonstrate Christ's love to children and families in need.
- Provide assistance and not condemnation or judgment to pregnant or parenting singles.
- Volunteer for agencies who help at-risk kids and families, such as your local domestic violence shelter or an after school program.
- Encourage your church to develop an outreach focus or programs that come alongside individuals and families in need both within and outside your congregation.

In John 10, Jesus describes himself as the shepherd and his people as the flock, and in verse 10 of that chapter he says, *"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."* As the hands and feet of Jesus, we too need to be pro-life as we are called to care for *"the least of these"* (Matthew 25). May God show us how we can do His work on earth by ensuring that all people can have life *"to the full"*.