

# OpenTheo

## Is Consent to Sex Consent to Pregnancy?

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### #STRask - Stand to Reason

Questions about how to respond to the claim that consent to sex is not consent to pregnancy and what to say to a Christian who argues that the law should give women a choice about abortion because God allows us to have free will and doesn't force us to follow his commands.

\* How would you respond to the claim that consent to sex is not consent to pregnancy?

\* How should I respond to a Christian who argues that the law should give women a choice about abortion because God allows us to have free will as human beings and doesn't force us to follow his commands?

## Transcript

Welcome to Stand to Reason's hashtag SDRask podcast with Amy Hall and Greg Kousser. Hello, Amos. Hello, Greg.

Alright, this first question comes from Joseph. How would you respond to the claim consent to sex is not consent to pregnancy? Some examples. No human can use an unwilling body.

The fetus has no reason to respond to sex. Is there a right to occupy the parents' womb without consent? Is there an analogy that works? Sure. Came immediately to mind.

Consent to driving under the influence of alcohol is not consent to having an accident. But having the accident is a result of being under the influence of alcohol. And so that's why people who are under the influence of alcohol and have an accident are held responsible for having a health care.

And they have an accident under the influence of alcohol. To me, this probably isn't Joseph's complaint, it's somebody else's raise the issue. This is a childish response because it's a demand that a person be allowed to enjoy the pleasure that they want to enjoy without taking responsibility for whatever consequences that are natural

consequences of the behavior, not inevitable consequences, but natural consequences of the behavior, and not taking any responsibility for that.

Okay, well, I didn't intend to have an accident. I intended to drive home drunk. Why would anybody intend to have an accident? How could I possibly be held responsible for this collision with this other person? And it's sad that they died, but I never intended that.

I just intended to get home. Have a good time at the bar, drive home peacefully, go to bed. That was my intention.

What's your complaint? You see how ridiculous that is. That's a childish defense. I can do whatever I want that makes me feel good as long as all I do is intend to feel good and not intend some other consequence that eventually waits as a result of my actions.

Too bad for them, too bad for that, but it wasn't what I intended. I didn't mean to do that. Just because a person didn't mean to do it does not mean they're not responsible for it.

It doesn't mean that you have the right now to kill that child. Exactly. So we're back to this basic question.

What is the unborn? If the unborn is not a human being, then no justification for abortion is necessary. Have the abortion. It doesn't matter what you intended.

Just have the abortion. No discussion. But if it is, no justification is necessary.

But if the unborn is a human being, then no justification for abortion is adequate. And I'm thinking of the standard justifications for abortion because none of those justify taking the life willfully taking the life of an innocent human being, which is what abortion does. So again, the excuse in a certain sense doesn't work, but it also skirts the bigger issue that it's regardless.

It doesn't mean that you have the right to kill this unborn child. Right. Because you lose sight of what it means to not consenting to pregnancy, because what they're really saying is they want to be able to kill their child.

So if you could reword it a little bit, maybe rephrase to consent to sex is not consent to not killing any child that might result from that sex. Right. So you're not consenting to not kill your children.

Do you see how that doesn't that doesn't follow? I mean, it could be that you didn't want to get pregnant and you didn't intend that as you pointed out. But that doesn't mean you can kill your child. So it just occurred to me that there's a little end around here, though I answered and we've discussed Joseph's the liability of the response that Joseph is offering us.

But why not just say, so what? I didn't I intended to have sex, but I intend to get pregnant. Okay, you're right. So what? Well, then I should be able to get an abortion.

Oh, wait a minute. So what does an abortion do? It ends the pregnancy. How is it in the pregnancy? It kills the fetus.

What kind of fetus is it? It's a human fetus. A human fetus is a human being, right? Yeah. So what you want to say is I did not intend to get pregnant.

So therefore it's okay for me to kill this human being. That's what it cashes out to. But what I was using as a street smarts approach, and I'm just asking these little straightforward common sensical questions to take the spin off what's being said.

So what you're actually saying, and by the way, this is in a certain sense, all we're doing is column number one, getting clarification on the claim. Since I did not intend to produce this human being growing inside of me, I can kill this human being that is growing inside of me. That's the point they're making without all the dressing on it.

So now we come to the next couple of comments he gives here because this is what they would probably come back with. No human can use an unwilling body. And the fetus has no right to occupy the parents womb without consent.

Okay, so I go into depth on this in street spots in the second chapter on abortion. And this is, I'm trying to think of the way they phrase the argument. I don't have the book in front of me, but this is the right to refuse.

I think it is called the right to refuse. In other words, the right to refuse help. Okay, and the illustration that's often given, and this goes back, excuse me, just even before Roe versus Wade to Judith, Judith Jarvis Thompson's argument, the famous violinist argument in 1971.

So right, yeah, 1971. And she says, I have a right to refuse being hooked up to another human being, a famous violinist in her illustration, to, in order to save that person's life, even if it's just hooked up for nine months. I do not have the obligation to hook myself up to that person to save their life.

Now, Thompson takes this as a parallel to pregnancy. And if it's okay to disconnect, so to speak, or not be hooked up, actually, in her case, would be disconnect the way she's described it. Then, then it'd be okay to disconnect from the baby through abortion.

Okay, now there's a number of ways in which this illustration is not parallel in a morally meaningful way. And I go into those details in the book. You can also go online.

There's a piece called Unstringing the Violinist, where I talk about that. But what I don't talk about is this other element to the right to refuse argument that's being offered here.

And so in the dialogues that I have in street smarts, I offer, well, so you're saying that you have a right to refuse to help somebody, even if the help that you would give them would save their life.

Absolutely. I said, well, you've got another alternative. What's that? Well, you can kill the other person, the violinist or whoever you can kill them.

No, well, I can't do that. I say, wait, why is that an option? Well, because that's the other alternative for you, okay? But you see, this is what you're offering here as an option for yourself with the pregnancy. You can't just walk away and refuse to give help, like in the illustration.

Your choice is not to refuse giving help, but to kill the one that needs the help. To not refusing it, you're killing that person, killing that individual human being. That's the difference here.

The so-called right to refuse argument is actually a right to kill argument, because refusal, quote, unquote, means to abort the fetus, which means to kill the child. And so once again, we're kind of taking the spin off and let's look at exactly what you're claiming we ought to be able to do. The reason why you have to kill you can't just walk away is because the baby is in exactly the place where she's supposed to be.

This is the natural order of things. Sex produces babies. And babies belong in the womb.

That's the only place they're supposed to be. It's not as if this is something strange and unnatural that has forced itself on you. This is the way the world works.

And the odd thing is, whenever we think about children, born children, the younger they are and the more dependent they are, the more we think we have a responsibility to help them. So the greater the responsibility, in fact, the worse it is if you kill them. So the younger the child, the more dependent, the worse it people consider it if you kill them.

Until they get into the womb and then everything switches on its head and they use that as an excuse to be able to kill the child. This is a justification, right. Right.

And ironically, when you think about this kind of argument, it's not just that the mother is giving aid to keep the child alive. The mother is producing the child, which goes back to your point about the natural place where this happens. This is exactly where the child is supposed to be and the mother is involved, not just in the actions that create the child, but also at every moment producing this child and helping this child to grow.

Okay. So this is not a foreign and this is a variation of this. Elaine McDonough has offered this variation and she thinks this in her article is called Breaking the Abortion Deadlock.

Like she's she's got a real new angle here. The baby is attacking the woman's body and

the mother, of course, they wouldn't claim the mother. Then they'd say the woman, the woman has a right to defend herself even with lethal force against this attack.

It's the most grotesque characterization of motherhood, which is what we're talking about that I've ever read, that the fetus, the unborn child, the mother is producing is attacking the Bible. So you know what, do you, your children go into the refrigerator and take some food? Do you call the police and have them arrested for theft? No, this is their food. This is where they get their food.

It's the appropriate thing. They're not, they're not like parasites, which is the way McDonald characterizes the unborn. I think this goes to our culture's problem right now, where people do not like to be constrained by reality.

They do not like it that sex produces babies. They do not like it that when they don't want the baby. When they don't write, when they don't want the baby, they don't want to be constrained.

They want to choose everything that happens to them and control reality in whatever way they want. And they don't want reality to be thrust upon them. They have negative consequences to them.

Right, but there, but there is a reality. There is a reality to the way humans reproduce to motherhood and the goodness and the beauty of that and the beauty of humanity and human beings and their value. And all these things are, are parts of reality that we cannot change, but people don't like to be constrained by that.

And so they want to find all these other ways of looking at it so that they can control it and design their lives the way they want. And I don't know if this is a product of the fact that we have this technology that gives us so much control over so many things. We just don't like to be constrained by any aspect of reality.

I think that that's a, that goes back to the garden, you know, that impulse. And now we have means by which we can get more of what we want regardless of the consequence to others. So let's go on to a question from Kate.

How do you respond to a Christian who argues that the law should give women a choice when it comes to murdering their child in the womb abortion because God allows us to have free will as human beings and doesn't force us to follow his commands or obey him? So this isn't, this isn't an argument that proves too much because the same argument can be used with every wrong. God gives us free choice. He gives us free choice to do wrong.

So let's just take Kate's Christian friend who raises this. God gives Kate the free choice to bust your friend right in the mouth. So why would we object to her doing that? Why would we say Kate you shouldn't bust your friend in the mouth because after all God

gave you the free choice to do it.

You can't claim it's wrong or we would shouldn't do anything to restrain you because remember this is the parallel with abortion. Why we shouldn't restrain a woman from harming her child because God would give her the freedom to do the evil thing. But the restraint is to keep people from doing evil to other people.

This is called civilization. I don't, and this coming from a Christian? That's why I said Kate should bust her in the mouth. You know, let her live according to her own principles.

We shouldn't have any laws restraining people's evil behavior because God gives the freedom to do the evil. Yes, but God doesn't give the license to do that. And he doesn't free people from the consequences either.

He instituted government to bear the sword to keep order and to punish evil and to reward the good. What's the point of any of the mosaic law or just take the Ten Commandments, just writ large as moral demands on humankind. Why any of those God gives us this is, this is where it becomes hard for me to understand how people can think like this.

And then it's coming from Kate's friend, apparently, or acquaintance, a Christian. No, no, no, we should not have any laws against things that we want to do that are evil because God gives us the freedom to do evil. Wait, run that by me again.

So no laws. This is why I say it proves too much. If we apply this consistently, and this is it taking the roof off tactic, okay, let's see where this leads.

No laws against evil because God gives us the freedom to do what's wrong, even though God doesn't like it. And he wants us not to do wrong. So therefore, no laws.

Is that true? That's anarchy. Antinomianism. No laws.

Is that what you believe? Pardon me while I steal your purse, bust you in the mouth, take your car, fire you without cause, steal your money, because God has given me the freedom to do that. I suspect that somebody making this argument has not thought clearly about what abortion is. I think this all goes back to, well, this is, well, whether or not you kill your child is just, it's not really a major thing.

It's, it's just your preference or something like that, because otherwise, I don't think she would say this about murder. I'm sure she wouldn't say this about murder of any born person. So I think if you just go back and you start talking about what abortion is, that could help resolve this whole issue.

Yeah, you have more, you have a higher view of people who make these kinds of arguments than I do, because I've actually seen people carry it, well, even infanticide is

being promoted by people nowadays, and all kinds of other crazy things. So, I mean, men can get pregnant. I mean, that's the view with so many people now.

And whatever sex you are is something that was assigned as if penises and vaginas don't come as part of the equipment, you know, of babies. Nobody assigns that. So this just shows how people that are let free can go crazy.

And this is a, you know, Romans one, God, all right, you want that? I'm going to give you over and off they go. And this is, so you have more confidence. This is why you look at, you show people pictures, and you know this of aborted children.

And this is part of our presentation. We do these kinds of presentations frequently. Here's what we're talking about.

You make it real. People are more angry oftentimes at the people who took the pictures than the people who did what the pictures depict. So what's up with that? Anyway.

This isn't you bring up something interesting here, Greg, because I think what happens sometimes. If you make the case, if somebody, if their heart is hardened and they're set on supporting abortions for their own purposes. And you make the case that's the same thing as killing your child.

If people are open to the truth, then they will say, Oh, well, then I shouldn't have an abortion. But if their heart is set on that, then what the reason in the opposite direction to the absurd conclusion, which is, Oh, then I can kill my born children. You can follow the logic either way.

And what I'm starting to see is that when I use these arguments to show people how absurd it is, I'm seeing more and more people following that reasoning. That's right. Into the other, into the wrong direction.

Well, this is, you know, we've actually been talking about this and writing about this for a long time in our blogs and our articles and solid grounds. And this is a logical slippery slope. Okay.

In other words, if you take this point of view and you apply the same logic to other circumstances, this is where it leads. And one, it could slip one way. It could say, well, if it leads to infanticide logically, if abortion on the band leads to justifying infanticide and infanticide is wrong, then abortion on demand should be wrong too for the same reason.

Or you could slip the other way. And this is what you're seeing. Well, if abortion on the band is right, then infanticide, and it's not any different than infanticide, then it ought to infanticide ought to be right.

It could slip either way. And I definitely see this. In fact, there was a, now it's been

probably at least 10 years, but there was a paper by two philosophers, Italian philosophers who talked about afterbirth abortion.

Now, I predicted this years before it would happen, but I didn't choose the term afterbirth abortion, which, I mean, who's doing their PR? That's not a very good way. They're promoting abortion after birth, but after birth is the residual from birth. You know, it's like yucky stuff.

So that's like not a good term. I called a postpartum abortion. So if abortions are okay, prepartum before the baby's born, then postpartum abortion should be okay too, which is defacto.

It's not even defacto. It is infanticide. And so I signaled that this was coming and that it came, but they could have at least used my term.

It would have made it sound better than afterbirth abortion. But this is exactly what people like Peter Singer is acknowledging, you know, the ethicist over Yale. People want to have consistent ideas.

And so when we're using these analogies or we're showing people trying to show people where they're thinking leads, now is the time to do it, because the farther we go down this path, the more people were going to see going the opposite direction. So they're going to drive that car right over the cliff and smile doing it. Well, that's it for today.

Greg, thank you, Joseph and Kate. Thank you for your questions. If you have a question, send it on Twitter or X as it's now called.

I still think that's ridiculous name. So you send that on X with the hashtag STRAsk or you can go to our website at [str.org](http://str.org) and just look for our hashtag STRAskPodcast page and you'll find a link there. Make sure your question is short and we will consider it for the show.

We look forward to hearing from you. This is Amy Hall and Greg Coco for Stand to Reason.