

## First Place – Senior High Division

### Today's Choices

By Jonas Y.

In our culture today, we often decide a baby's worth based on how "wanted" that baby is. When a pregnancy is celebrated, everyone gathers around with excitement and love. But when it feels inconvenient or overwhelming, that same child is suddenly called a "choice." This double standard doesn't just shape opinions—it shapes lives. It asks us to decide who deserves to live, instead of recognizing that every human life already has value.

I volunteer with Stanton, a pregnancy resource center that supports women who are scared, alone, or pressured to end their pregnancies. As a young man, I usually help fix computers or clean the office, but those small tasks have allowed me to see powerful moments up close. One day, a woman about twenty came in to the clinic, and she said abortion was her only option. I remember not looking at her and staring at the computer because I was helping update the software. Her family told her it was the responsible thing to do. But everything changed when she saw her baby's heartbeat on the ultrasound screen. Her tears weren't of fear anymore; they were of recognition. For the first time, she saw her child as real, not theoretical.

That moment showed me that abortion isn't a solution; rather, it's the loss of a human life. Science confirms and tells us life begins at conception. From that first heartbeat, something irreversible has begun, a separate person with their own DNA, future, and purpose. To end that life isn't healthcare; it's ending potential. A culture that measures life's worth by convenience risks losing its sense of humanity altogether.

I understand that some women face heartbreak situations; these are real struggles. While I don't understand personally, I have compassion for the struggles of poverty, mental health, or fear. But the answer isn't to eliminate the child; it's to surround the mother with care and resources. At Stanton, they don't just say we're pro-life; they offer those solutions. There are hundreds of these organizations around the country that help with clothing, food, financial classes, and emotional support because genuine compassion means helping both mother and baby thrive.

No one can argue that abortion ends one life and wounds another. It silences a heartbeat and leaves a scar on the mother. We simply cannot allow this to be the solution any longer. We must all agree that the abortion pill puts abortions into people's homes and alienates women even more. If mental health is a concern then drugs and abortion drugs need to be abolished. Being pro-life isn't about politics; it's about believing that every life, no matter how small or inconvenient, is worth protecting. We can build a world that values both women and their children and protects families, which is the backbone of our country. It starts when we choose love instead of destruction, and hope instead of fear.

## **Second Place – Senior High Division**

### **The Joy of Life**

**By Scarlett K.**

He wears the brightest smile, sparking hundreds more. His delighted squeals bring laughter to those who hear them. Anthony's funny expressions, warm hugs, every quirk – all could have been lost to the world forever should his mother have made a fated trip to an abortion clinic. She had indeed considered this upon hearing her baby had Down Syndrome, yet in the end she chose life, allowing my grandparents to adopt him. A diagnosis of Down Syndrome is only one of the many reasons why women choose abortion. Perhaps the mother is a teen who feels scared at the responsibility of a child or a woman traumatized by rape. For her, joy is diminished, and an unwanted baby is an obstacle to her happiness. However, I have witnessed the opposite. Joy is in every life. Abortion is not only the robbing of life, but also the robbing of joy.

Down Syndrome is a common reason why the unborn are terminated. It is estimated that 60% to 90% of infants diagnosed with this chromosomal abnormality are aborted in the U.S. (Natoli et al. 142). Sadly, nearly 100% of babies with Down Syndrome are aborted in Iceland (Quinones). Many think abortion shows compassion because they are convinced the child will live a life of misery.

But, growing up with an uncle with Down Syndrome, I saw just the opposite. People with Down Syndrome live fulfilling lives; they hold jobs, travel, and play sports. When my uncle Anthony won a medal in the Special Olympics, he proudly showed it to everyone for a week. He travels so frequently that once a flight crew requested to be on his flight! He DJs our parties, keeps track of SpaceX rocket launches, and even raises goats for our local fair.

Anthony is only one example of the joy life can bring. Women who conceive through rape and give birth often find healing in the baby. Take Cindy Speltz, who conceived through rape and chose life. She said her baby “gave me a thread of hope to begin to heal,” (qtd. in Terzo). Additionally, adoptive parents find infinite joy in children who might otherwise have been aborted. This is certainly true in the case of my grandparents.

All pre-born children have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. They are created by God with those rights. If a child with disabilities can bring such immense joy, all children in the womb should be given the same chance. Anthony was given this chance, and the happiness that his life emanates impacts so many. With this in mind, how much joy are we robbing ourselves of through abortion?

Anthony is a living reminder to me of why I'm pro-life. He has shown me the joy that every life brings. He is the opposite of a weight pulling us down; rather he lifts us up, as all life should be given the opportunity to do.

### Works Cited

1. Natoli, Jaime et al. "Prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome: a systematic review of termination rates." *Prenatal Diagnosis*, Volume 32, Issue 2, 2012, p. 142, <https://doi.org/10.1002/pd.2910>.
2. Quinones, Julian, and Arijeta Lajka. "'What Kind of Society Do You Want to Live in?': Inside the Country Where Down Syndrome Is Disappearing." CBS News, CBS Interactive, 15 Aug. 2017, [www.cbsnews.com/news/down-syndrome-iceland/](http://www.cbsnews.com/news/down-syndrome-iceland/).
3. Terzo, Sarah. "Women Who Conceived through Rape: 'My Baby Was Part of My Healing.'" Live Action, 15 Apr. 2019, [www.liveaction.org/news/women-conceived-rape-baby-part-healing](http://www.liveaction.org/news/women-conceived-rape-baby-part-healing).

## **Third Place – Senior High Division**

### **The Most Precious Blessing**

**By Elizabeth G.**

I still remember the first time I volunteered in the nursery at church. I was young, not any older than 12. A couple handed me their baby, and I felt a rush of joy and panic. I was stunned that they were entrusting me with this delicate, yet precious life. The child stirred in my arms for a few seconds, adjusting to the new position she was held in. Then, she fell back into a peaceful slumber.

Babies have always been a part of my life. From my little brother, 10 years younger than me, whom I prayed for earnestly, to various nannying jobs. While many of my friends get home from work tired from a host of interactions with hangry customers, I come home from work with the latest cold and catchy children's song, refusing to leave my head. Yet, tired as I am, my job always fills me with the deepest sense of joy. I am pro-life because a baby's life begins at conception, and mankind should not endeavour to take the Lord's power for ourselves.

The primary reason that I am pro-life is that life begins at conception. This is the moment the DNA that determines nearly everything about a person is formed. From this moment on, a mother's womb is not merely home to a clump of cells or fetus, but to a little baby. Psalm 139:13-14 says, "you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." That precious baby, regardless of its size or stage of development, is made in the image of God. It has a soul, and the Lord shaped and created it with the most wondrous plan. Psalm 127:3 says, "children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward." No matter the circumstances a child is conceived under, it is not a result of fate or a punishment, but a sweet blessing. It would be grievously wrong to murder this vulnerable child.

My pro-life views are not only shaped by life starting at conception, but also because mankind should not take the Lord's power for themselves. Deuteronomy 32:39 says, "There is no god before me; I kill and I make alive." Our Creator and King is the one who determines how long our lives will last - down to the very second. He has the most beautiful plan for every moment of it, too! As such, we should not deem ourselves "gods" and usurp the Lord's power by determining which innocent people have a right to life based on our preference or ease.

Ultimately, when looking at the abortion issue, my pro-life commitments stem from the reality that babies have just as much worth as each one of us, and we are called to deny our flesh by submitting to the Lord's plan. May we never forget how precious life truly is!

#### **Works Cited**

ESV Study Bible. Wheaton, Ill., Crossway Bibles, 2016.