

The Brown Street Beacon

*"...Shine out among them like beacon lights,
holding out to them the Word of Life" (Phil 2:15-16)*



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Misunderstanding Love

Almost a decade ago, a mother by the name of Ayelet Waldman, wrote an essay in which she stated that she loved her husband more than her children. She later appeared on “The Oprah Winfrey Show,” at which time the majority of women, especially those who were mothers, voiced their strong disagreement with Mrs. Waldman. Nevertheless, she stood her ground and actually made a very articulate and convincing argument concerning why wives should love their husbands more than their children. As a result, she has gone on in the last ten years to become a very successful author.

I believe that Mrs. Waldman was right in her assessment about wives loving their husbands more than their children (the same is true about husbands as well); however, my belief in truth of this proposition is based on a different reason. First, whenever I hear anyone making an argument about loving a spouse more than loving children, I know that there is at least a little misunderstanding about the nature of love. The fact is, we love our spouses and our children differently. Let’s consider the different kinds of love that we experience.

First, there is *agape love*. This is the highest love of all and is a term used to describe God, Himself (1 John 4:8). This love doesn’t demand reciprocation. It is completely unconditional for it is a reasoned love, and thus, God expects us to demonstrate it even towards our enemies (Matthew 5:48). The best definition of this love is that it *“always causes us to act in the best interest of whatever it is that is loved.”* Now, this is a love that we have for both our children and our spouse, as well as everyone else. With this love it is not a matter of loving one person more than another because this love isn’t demonstrated in degrees. With *agape love* we love all people the same.

Next, there is *phileo love*. This word refers to brotherly love. It is the word from which we get the English word Philadelphia and is an important and biblical kind of love (Rom. 12:10; 1Thess. 4:9; Heb. 13:1). In the New Testament this word is mostly used in reference to the close bond that should be felt and the kindness that should be demonstrated toward brethren in the faith. This is a kind of love that we should have for our spouse. It demands kindness and affection that leads to being close friends. Your husband or wife should be the best friend that you have in this world. On the hand, *phileo* is never used in scripture to describe the relationship between parents and children. Perhaps when children become adults, this love will exist, but not really in their early years growing up. One problem parents sometimes have is that they try to be friends with their children instead of the authority figure that they need to be in the home.

Then we have *eros* love which refers to the love between sexes. The word erotic is derived from that word. Clearly this is a love that we have for our spouses and would be a part of the "one flesh" relationship that would sustain them. Becoming one flesh within the confines of marriage is a special and unique relationship that we don't have with anyone except our spouse. It is a part of what makes that relationship more special and closer than any other that we sustain with the exception of our relationship with God. When thinking of the relationship that Christ has with His church, Paul, by inspiration, chose the marriage relationship with which to compare it. It goes without saying that we don't *eros* our children.

Finally there is *stergein* love which describes the love of family. It is the natural love between parents and children, brothers and sisters, etc. This word only appears in the negative in the Bible (2 Tim. 3:3). It best describes our relationship with our children, but it wouldn't be inappropriate to use with regard to our spousal relationship since, certainly, husbands and wives are the core of the family unit.

So, when viewing love from this standpoint, one realizes that when it comes to loving our children and loving our spouse, it really isn't a matter of loving one more than the other, as much as it is loving them differently. The argument, though, could be made for Mrs. Waldman ultimately being right in her assessment because we clearly love our spouse in more ways than we do our children. While we *agape* and *stergein* our children, we love our spouses with every kind of love. In her original defense of her essay Mrs. Waldman made an excellent point. She warned mothers to do better at cultivating the relationship they had with their husbands, because one day the children will be gone, and then it will be just the two of them. The truth is, the best thing that parents can do for their children is love each other, giving them a home filled with peace and security.

Don

Abortion: The Lesser Evil

Aaron Erhardt

On June 30, 2010 an article entitled "Yes, abortion is killing. But it's the lesser evil" appeared in The Times [London]. It was written by Antonia Senior, a devoted feminist. Her perspective on the abortion issue is very telling.

Senior affirms that from conception an unborn child is a human life. She writes, "What seems increasingly clear to me is that, in the absence of an objective definition, a fetus is a life by any subjective measure. My daughter was formed at conception, and all the barely understood alchemy that turned the happy accident of that particular sperm meeting that particular egg into my darling, personality-packed toddler took place at that moment." She even criticizes those within the pro-choice movement who deny that an unborn child is a life. "Any other conclusion is a convenient lie that we on the pro-choice side of the debate tell ourselves to make us feel better about the action of taking a life."

Wow! Not only does Senior admit that an unborn child is a life, but she also says that those who deny it are lying to make themselves feel better about the action of taking a life! What comes next, however, is even more shocking.

Senior seems headed in the right direction. Usually, if one comes to the realization that an unborn child is a life they reject abortion. Not Senior, however. She argues that the feminist agenda trumps life, and therefore abortion is justifiable. She writes, "But you cannot separate women's rights from their right to fertility control... The nearly 200,000 aborted babies in the UK each year are the lesser evil... If you are willing to die for a cause, you must be prepared to kill for it, too."

According to Senior, the feminist agenda must be defended at all costs -- even if that cost is hundreds of thousands of dead babies! Their brutal slayings are "the lesser evil." Such insanity reminds me of the conclusions of abortionist Dr. William F. Harrison in an article entitled "Why I Provide Abortions." He wrote, "No one, neither the patient receiving an abortion, nor the person doing the abortion, is ever, at anytime, unaware that they are ending a life. We just don't believe that a developing embryo or fetus whose mother cannot or will not accept it, has the same moral claims on us, claims to autonomy and justice that an adolescent or adult woman has."

It is hard for any decent person to stomach the reasoning of Antonia Senior. While we should all want equal rights for women, minorities, etc., it is outrageous and wrong to suggest that the feminist agenda is more important than human life. No, abortion is not the lesser evil!