

Exposing Enemies Within the Church: A 7-Session Bible Study Series  
Session 3: Situationism ~ Three Case Studies

**Group 1 ~ Situationism:**  
**How “Love” and an Emphasis on the Ends Derail People as they Make Moral and Ethical Decisions**

The following actually appears on a Planned Parenthood webpage (<https://bit.ly/3UaQCsk>).

Everyone has their own unique and valid reasons for having an abortion. Some of the many different reasons people decide to end a pregnancy include:

- They want to be the best parent possible to the kids they already have.
- They’re not ready to be a parent yet.
- It’s not a good time in their life to have a baby.
- They want to finish school, focus on work, or achieve other goals before having a baby.
- They’re not in a relationship with someone they want to have a baby with.
- They’re in an abusive relationship or were sexually assaulted.
- The pregnancy is dangerous or bad for their health.
- The fetus won’t survive the pregnancy or will suffer after birth.
- They just don’t want to be a parent.

Deciding to have an abortion doesn’t mean you don’t want or love children. In fact, 6 out of 10 people who get abortions already have kids — and many of them decide to end their pregnancies so they can focus on the children they already have. And people who aren’t already parents when they get an abortion often go on to have a baby later, when they feel they’re in a better position to be a good parent. The bottom line is, deciding if and when to have a baby is very personal, and only you know what’s best for you and your family.

**Discuss:**

1. How does the above presentation from Planned Parenthood frame the issue of whether or not to have an abortion in terms of “love”?
2. What would a reader’s typical response be to the statement, “The bottom line is, deciding if and when to have a baby is very personal, and only you know what’s best for you and your family”? Why is this false?
2. How does it emphasize “the ends” in its framing of this issue?
3. What guidelines from God’s Word apply with regard to this challenging issue, or, to use different terms, this “choice” or “dilemma.” Note that no matter what term one uses to refer to the decision, the realities surrounding it remain the same.
4. Many do not know just how horrible abortion is. An new animated video presents the truth about abortion, and every older teen and every adult need to see it. Still, viewer discretion is advised. The video is called “The Procedure” and can be seen at the website of the ministry that produced it (Choice 4 2, or Choice for Two): [www.choice42.com/videos](http://www.choice42.com/videos). Ask participants to make a note of this and to consider watching the video at home.
5. Of course, choosing the right thing to do according to God’s Word often isn’t easy. It can, in fact, be very difficult. Have you seen the Kendrick Brothers movie *Lifemark*? For the trailer, visit <https://lifemarkmovie.com>. Those who have are invited to describe how Melissa’s decision to place her son up for adoption was difficult, even as it was right. Describe the security that comes from making the right decision morally and ethically, despite the difficulty involved.
6. Describe how doing the right thing paves the way for a person to experience a kind of freedom that escapes those who are unwilling to live according to God’s law.

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**Group 2 ~ Situationism**

**How “Love” and an Emphasis on the Ends Derail People as they Make Moral and Ethical Decisions**

**Beware:** Emphasizing “love” and the ends of an ethical decision guides the decision-maker to be, in a sense, people focused. While this may sound good, it is fraught with all kinds of problems.

Let’s think this through. When presented with an ethical question or dilemma, the situationist asks, “Who is to be helped?” This is just a few steps away from the often-heard question, “What will accomplish the greatest good for the greatest number of people?” Again, this may sound just fine on a surface level, but this approach always leads the decision-maker to a subjective assessment, or to subjective “truth” as opposed to objective truth. **Discuss** why this is the case.

**Consider the following situation:**

If Myrtle Smith, who has Alzheimer’s disease, is euthanized rather than given the care she needs and made to feel as comfortable and as secure as possible throughout the duration of her illness and throughout the remaining time she has left to live, then Robby, her young adult grandson, will be able to attend college. Robby’s cousin, Allison, might be able to get a car for her 16th birthday. And Myrtle’s three adult children won’t have to endure the trauma of seeing their mom slowly lose her ability to connect and engage with people.

Even though it may not seem to be the case, questions like *What will accomplish the greatest good for the greatest number?* and *What action would be most loving?* move the decision-making process into an emotional arena where subjectivism reigns. In other words, this is an arena where people have been derailed from objective truth. The true ethicist asks, “What does the law say?” and “What is right?” and seeks to act accordingly.<sup>1</sup>

**Discuss:**

1. **Explain** how focusing on “the greatest good for the greatest number” often can tilt a person’s decision-making process toward fulfilling his or her own selfish desires.
2. **Talk about** how focusing on “the greatest good” pushes the decision-maker to redefine the words *greatest* and *good*. In the above illustration involving Myrtle Smith’s dementia, decision-makers will be tempted to think that euthanizing Grandma so Robby can go to college and so Allison can have a car would be for their greater good, and even for their grandmother Myrtle’s greater good, too. What a lie! Might it be possible that greater good could come from sacrificing for Grandma’s sake? Of course, this is not to say that doing what is right will be easy. **Discuss**.
3. **Respond** to this statement from Rev. Cary Gordon: “Situationism makes humanistic love one’s absolute, but love without law is like water without a bucket to contain it. Law without love is like having an empty bucket with no access to water. Love without law is nothing more than a path of sensual indulgence.”<sup>2</sup>

**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup>Pastor Sam Jones, *5 Steps to Kill a Nation* (Newport Beach, CA: The GK Publishing Company 2020), 97-104.

<sup>2</sup>Rev. Cary K. Gordon, *A Storm A Message A Bottle: A Road Mat to American Redemption*, (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House 2015), 63.

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**How “Love” and an Emphasis on the Ends Derail People as they Make Moral and Ethical Decisions**

In the days leading up to the mid-term elections in 2022, Democrats offered legislation to codify same-sex marriage, which was effectively mandated by the Supreme Court in *Obergefell* on June 26, 2015, into federal law. An article<sup>1</sup> posted July 26, 2022 at “The Washington Stand,” an online news outlet of the Family Research Council, reported that in July,

[f]orty-seven House Republicans<sup>2</sup> joined a unanimous Democratic caucus in voting for the bill, leading to speculation that Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) might be able to find enough Republican votes to pass the legislation. Although a handful of Republican senators have gone on record in opposition<sup>3</sup> to the bill, a few have indicated support, while the majority have remained noncommittal.

Senator Joni Ernst (R-Iowa) is an example of a Republican who is considering voting for the bill. Despite criticizing<sup>4</sup> the *Obergefell* decision in 2015, Ernst recently told reporters that she was “keeping a very open mind” about codifying same-sex marriage into federal law. She indicated<sup>5</sup> she may support the bill because she has a “good number of very close friends that are same-sex married.”

Ernst’s remarks reflect what is increasingly becoming the view of a portion of Republican lawmakers. Although the most recent version of the Republican Party platform condemns<sup>6</sup> the *Obergefell* and *United States v. Windsor* decisions and states that “marriage between one man and one woman is the foundation for a free society,” formerly stalwart defenders of natural marriage seem to feel less strongly than they once did.

In the end, Senator Ernst voted in support of the so-called “Respect for Marriage Act,”<sup>7</sup> along with eleven other Republican senators. President Biden signed it into law on December 13, 2022.

**Discuss:**

1. How did Senator Ernst’s statement that she might support the bill “because she has a ‘good number of very close friends that are same-sex married’” reveal that she is making a subjective decision rather than an objective one?
2. Read the following, which appears in this article:<sup>8</sup> “Regardless of ‘feelings,’ marriage is what it is inherently, and it can be nothing more and nothing else. It is a God-created institution in which one man and one woman are committed together for life. That commitment constitutes a family, and the children that come from that union become a part of that family. As I have heard an astute observer say, every healthy person, whether male or female, has a complete respiratory system, a complete skeletal system, a complete circulatory system, a complete digestive system, and numerous other complete bodily systems — except one. Everyone has *only half a reproductive system*, and the other complementary half *must* come from a member of the opposite sex. This is God’s statement addressing [and revealing] what marriage is, and He wove this statement into the fabric of nature. In other words, God’s and nature’s definition of marriage is [the same and is] self-evident.”<sup>9</sup> **Ask and discuss:** Why is this assessment objective as opposed to subjective? To what dangers does this assessment (and nature itself) point as marriage is being redefined in government and society?

<sup>1</sup><https://bit.ly/3F7ESCV>

<sup>2</sup><https://bit.ly/3F4iGcx>

<sup>3</sup><https://cnn.it/3VqDz7T>

<sup>4</sup><https://bit.ly/3VweHes>

<sup>5</sup><https://politi.co/3F4Y7Nn>

<sup>6</sup><https://bit.ly/3OGPD1T>

<sup>7</sup><https://dailysign.al/3WZBwHQ>

<sup>8</sup><https://bit.ly/3XF5lz0>

<sup>9</sup><https://bit.ly/3VetlBY>