



# **The Case for Life: Equipping Christians to Engage the Culture**

*Scott Klusendorf*

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## **The Case for Life: Equipping Christians to Engage the Culture** Scott Klusendorf

Pro-life Christians, take heart: the pro-life message *can* compete in the marketplace of ideas-provided Christians properly understand and articulate that message. Too many Christians do not understand the essential truths of the pro-life position, making it difficult for them to articulate a biblical worldview on issues like abortion, cloning, and embryo research.

*The Case for Life* provides intellectual grounding for the pro-life convictions that most evangelicals hold. Author Scott Klusendorf first simplifies the debate: the sanctity of life is not a morally complex issue. It's not about choice, privacy, or scientific progress. To the contrary, the debate turns on one key question: What is the unborn? From there readers learn how to engage the great bio-tech debate of the twenty-first century, how to answer objections persuasively, and what the role of the pro-life pastor should be.

## **The Case for Life: Equipping Christians to Engage the Culture Details**

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# **From Reader Review The Case for Life: Equipping Christians to Engage the Culture for online ebook**

## **Frank Peters says**

This book was considerably better than expected. While I am strongly pro-life, I greatly dislike the lack of any civilised discussion and debate that occurs on this topic. And, the typical emotive arguments on both sides are frustrating. The beginning of the book was excellent. In this section, the author outlines the objective arguments for the pro-life position. Ultimately, it is centred around if the child is human – in which case abortion must wrong. The book then went on to discuss how to answer challenges to the position. This section was good, but became highly repetitive. And from there the book went into the politics, where I found myself disagreeing to aspects of what was written. Thus, I like the book but cannot bring myself to endorse it fully (although the first few chapters are the best I have ever read on this topic).

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## **Luke Nix says**

I have been quite excited to read Scott Klusendorf's The Case For Life: Equipping Christians to Engage the Culture. From my elementary school days, I have been exposed to pro-life Christians who have faced ridicule, fines, physical harm, and even jail time for their commitment to the unborn's right to life. It was not until my exposure to Christian apologetics that I became aware that the fight was more than each side just emoting at one another. In this book, Klusendorf provides the scientific case for the humanity of the unborn and the objective moral wrongness of killing them. He addresses many common and powerful challenges to the prolife position.

I cannot recommend this book enough to everyone. Though it is not a comprehensive case, it is a succinct presentation of the case for the pro-life position, against the pro-choice/abortion position, and the answers to the most common objections and powerful rebuttals. Every person who is pro-life needs to have this information to equip them to provide a case for their view that goes beyond merely emotional appeals. I highly recommend this book for educators, pastors, and small-group leaders to assist with preparing more people with the resources to defend life in the public square.

For my chapter-by-chapter review, please follow this link: <http://lukenixblog.blogspot.com/2014/...>

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## **Jennifer says**

The Case for Life by Scott Klusendorf is appropriately subtitled "Equipping Christians to Engage the Culture." That is exactly what this book does. Every pro-life Christian ought to read this book and practice the suggestions it contains, regularly reviewing the questions at the end of each chapter that are meant to clarify and drive home the essentials of the abortion debate. Klusendorf does a great job of systematically addressing the issues, foundational truths, science, logic, common opposition arguments, and pitfalls that pro-life advocates trap themselves in, all while maintaining the spirit of love and grace that should always accompany the truths of this debate.

Reading this as a pregnant woman, I found it hard at times to get through parts of this book--not because it

was sensationalized but because of the horrors of abortion and its philosophy that I was made to confront. While the book is not intentionally graphic, some of the simple realities are still just as hard to face. Having done so now, I am glad that I did. I feel better prepared to engage in meaningful dialogue with abortion proponents or with those who are still on the fence. I also feel like the book helped me solidify a more comprehensive approach to what it means to be pro-life by addressing topics like abortifacients in birth control, stem cell research, and other reproductive technology.

Klusendorf also spent the final part of the book addressing concerns that some Christians have regarding how the abortion debate can obscure the Gospel. While admitting that this happens, Klusendorf demonstrates that not only is this not a necessary outcome but also that addressing the nature of life holds a significant place in a true understanding of the Gospel. Christians who are prepared to discuss the topic well will find that it becomes a door to sharing more of the Christian worldview, including the Gospel which lies at its center.

Any Christian who wants to engage the culture meaningfully on issues of life ought to read and interact with this book regularly. And even if one thinks he will not be the one to engage the topic, it is worth reading just to understand the larger topics at hand and to build a more comprehensive view of life issues. As technology continues to advance, Christians will likely continue to face new aspects of this conversation. Having a biblically-based foundation will make encountering these new and unforeseen questions a little easier to deal with. For these reasons and more, I cannot recommend this book enough as a resource to every pro-life Christian.

\*I received a free copy of this book through Crossway's book review program Beyond the Page.

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### **Amanda Emerson says**

I enjoyed reading Klusendorf's book which encourages Christians to really take a stand for life and for truth. The book is clearly laid out into four parts. The first part helps Christians to simplify debates over abortion and embryonic stem cell research. The second section shows how moral neutrality is really impossible. The third section helps Christians to answer common objections. This section was so good as it really tackled some hard cases. The final section addresses questions related to pastors including whether or not it is okay to join hands with other religions to protect life. I wholeheartedly agree that yes it is okay to join hands with others for the sake of saving lives. The book also talks about how to give hope to post-abortive men and women. I love the author's grace filled approach. Overall this book was clearly laid out and really helped me to think about hard issues that I honestly don't think about enough. I highly recommend this book. Please note that I did receive a review copy of this book from Crossway Publishing. All opinions are my own.

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### **Jimmy says**

I meant to write a review of this book earlier, with better memory of the reading rather than two years after finishing the book! In light of the importance of the abortion issue even being more so with the election season and Planned Parenthood being on the news, it's important that I review this work as a Christian resource to equip the believers with the issue. The author is a Christian bio-ethicist who writes this work for Evangelicals as his primary audience, though of course those who are not Christians will benefit from his content as well in making a case for the unborn as a human person. He even have a chapter presenting the

case for Christianity summarized. This book is excellent for contemporary discussion about abortion, with the author devoting a chapter (chapter four) discussing the issue of Embryonic Stem Cell Research (ESCR) as well. The first part of the book presents the prolife argument very well, beginning with the need of clarifying the debate by focusing on what the issue really is about, and then asking what is the unborn, whether human beings are valuable, etc. For those who have been involved in the abortion debate, one realizes that all kinds of objections are thrown against the prolife position and this book is helpful addressing some of these objections and popular side topics. In fact, this section of the book is the biggest portion of the book. Klusendorf ends the book with a section of how to act for the cause of the unborn, such as what pastors can do and how Christians can be involved with prolife with others without compromising their faith. Worth the read--and perhaps for me, a second read of this book again to refresh the memory and the arguments.

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### **Jason Mccool says**

While Scott frames most of his case scientifically, and ethically, in a way that can appeal to anyone regardless of religious affiliation (or non-affiliation), I have to say if this were required reading simply for all who call themselves Christians in America, elective abortion here would be ended within one election cycle. Once people knew the truth, no candidate supporting abortion would ever get elected.

Scott lays out his case very logically, establishing a solid foundation for why abortion is wrong, then thoroughly answering objections to each of those foundational points. There are study questions at the end of each chapter that make this useful for a group study tool, as well as a list of resources for the reader wanting make their own case for life. The content is well footnoted (which I personally prefer to endnotes for ease of reference while reading), so you always have the source for statements both for and against life. Towards the end of the book he also addresses the post-abortion guilt of women and men that have been involved in that decision, pointing them towards Christ, the only source of genuine healing.

It's interesting that although the book was written in 2009, he makes a statement at the end of the book very appropriate to the current Planned Parenthood controversy of them selling baby parts: "killing babies is very profitable while saving them is very costly." but once we ask ourselves the basic, primary question, "What is the unborn baby, is it human?", then we are left with no choice but to save them. Read the book, and let's end the legally sanctioned murder of 58 million innocent babies.

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### **Bob says**

Many Christians & pro-life citizens often think something like this, "I knew abortion was wrong, but had no words to back up my belief." "The Case for Life" does a fantastic job of breaking down the abortion debate as the author examines both sides of the argument. He knows the position of abortion-choice advocates better than they know it themselves!

Every Christian ought to read this book & practice the suggestions it contains. Also by regularly reviewing the questions at the end of each chapter they will help clarify & drive home the essentials of the abortion debate. The author Scott Klusendorf does a great job of systematically addressing the issues, foundational truths, science, logic, common opposition arguments, & pitfalls that pro-life advocates trap themselves in, all while maintaining the spirit of love & grace that should always accompany the truths of this debate.

This book is outstanding in every way.

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### **Kim says**

Good introduction to the issues surrounding abortion and the identity of the human fetus. Lots of good recommended resources as well as a few chapters on addressing the most common pro-abortion arguments.

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### **Bob O'bannon says**

This book is a relentless onslaught of devastating arguments against the pro-choice position, along with a convincing plea to Christians to muster the courage to defend the weak and defenseless among us. Most Americans and many Christians are simply swallowing what the popular culture tells them about this issue, but Klusendorf supplies such an abundance of well-reasoned pro-life arguments that it makes one wonder how the pro-choice movement has so successfully won the day (so far, anyway). At the root of this debate and this book is what makes a human valuable, a profound question which has far-reaching consequences for how a society functions. Certainly there are few causes more worth fighting for than the inherent value of a human life.

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### **Sarah says**

as a pro-life atheist, I'm not really the target audience for this book. Nevertheless, I found the part that deals with pro-life arguments to be well written and helpful, and even the part that dealt solely with Christian apologetics to be interesting. I disagree with many of the religious arguments the author makes, including his claims of the reliability of the Bible – (that's been well debunked in other places), and his belief that only people with a Christian worldview can have a basis for morality. He seems to feel that morality exists only because of God's laws and only those with knowledge of God's laws truly have a framework for their moral beliefs – basically, he acknowledges that you can be "good without God" (which I'm grateful for) but he maintains that only Christians have a valid basis for their morality – in other words, moral relativism is indefensible except from a Christian perspective. I would disagree with that. He doesn't consider morals as a social construct that is passed down from one generation to another – that is a possibility he never addresses. nor does he consider that perhaps the "conscience" evolved alongside with sentience as a part of the human psyche in order to make it easier for humans to live in peace. he also attempts to justify the belief in God and intelligent design by maintaining that since moral values exist independently of biology, then God must exist – a line of argument I think is specious.

I could go on discussing the theological arguments that the author makes, but I'll close by saying that I think Christians will only be even more convinced that they are right by reading this book. While half the book was irrelevant to the abortion debate, it was still interesting to read and it did give me some insights into how to debate the abortion issue with pro-choice opponents.

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## Chris Wray says

“Most people who say they oppose abortion do just enough to salve the conscience but not enough to stop the killing.”

This is an excellent summary of the pro-life position, written in a firm yet winsome style. While I don't expect it to change the mind of pro-choice advocates, it will remind and encourage pro-lifers like myself that our position:

- Is backed by the scientific evidence
- Is more logical, intuitive and self-consistent
- Is more just, merciful and reflective of basic human rights and dignity

### Introduction

There are two foundational points to make in any discussion of abortion. First, we're arguing about moral truth, and whether it is real and knowable or simply a preference. Second, we're arguing over human value, and whether we are valuable for what we are intrinsically or only valuable for what we can do functionally.

Pro-life Christians answer that truth is real, knowable and unnegotiable. Although humans differ in their respective degrees of development, they are nonetheless equal because they share a common human nature that bears the image of their Creator. Humans have value simply because they are human.

We need to simplify the debate by focusing on the one question that truly matters: What is the unborn? These issues are not morally complex, though they are often presented that way. Can we kill the unborn? Yes, but only if the unborn are not human beings. The issue is not really one of choice, as some choices are wrong, like killing innocent human beings simply because they are in the way and cannot defend themselves. We thus make our case in two steps. Step one is to simplify the issue as above; step two is to make a case for life.

Pro-life advocates contend that elective abortion unjustly takes the life of a defenceless human being. This simplifies the abortion controversy by focusing public attention on just one question: Is the unborn a member of the human family? If so, killing him or her to benefit others is a serious moral wrong. It treats the distinct human being, with his or her own inherent moral worth, as nothing more than a disposable instrument. Conversely, if the unborn are not human, elective abortion requires no more justification than having a tooth pulled. Pro-life advocates defend their case using science and philosophy. Scientifically, they argue that from the earliest stages of development, the unborn are distinct, living, and whole human beings. True, they have yet to grow and mature, but they are whole human beings nonetheless. Philosophically, there is no morally significant difference between the embryo we once were and the adults we are today. As has been pointed out using the acronym SLED, differences of size, level of development, environment, and degree of dependency are not relevant in the way that abortion advocates need them to be.

In short, pro-life advocates contend that although humans differ immensely with respect to talents, accomplishments, and degrees of development, they are nonetheless equal because they share a common human nature. The pro-life view is that it's always wrong to take human life without proper justification. This means that we define elective abortion as those abortions not medically necessary to save the mother's physical life (e.g. in the case of ectopic pregnancy).

A useful heuristic is, whenever we hear an argument for elective abortion to stop and ask this question:

Would this justification for killing the unborn work for killing a toddler? If not, your critic is assuming that the unborn aren't human, a point for which he needs to argue. The science of embryology is clear. From the earliest stages of development, the unborn are distinct, living, and whole human beings.

### **Embryology and the Pro-Life Position**

In summary, the evidence clearly indicates that the human embryo, from the zygote stage forward, is a distinct, unitary human organism— a human being. The key point is that even though the cells in the early embryo are totipotent (that is, able to develop into any kind of bodily cell), they function in a coordinated manner as parts of a unified organism, the embryo.

Again, humans have value simply because they are human, not because of some acquired property that they may gain or lose during their lifetime. If you deny this, it's difficult to account for fundamental human equality for anyone. Pro-Life advocates contend that from the earliest stages of development, the unborn are distinct, living, and whole human organisms. They are not parts of larger human beings (like skin cells are) but are whole human entities capable of directing their own internal growth and development. Pro-lifers don't look to theology to tell them these things but to the science of embryology.

Science alone cannot justify the pro-life position, though it can give us the facts we need to draw moral conclusions on a host of controversial issues, including abortion, embryonic stem cell research, and cloning. Thus, the first step in resolving these issues is to state the proper scientific facts about the biological nature of the unborn entity. As we have seen, those facts are not in dispute.

### **A Philosophical Question: Human Non-Persons?**

We are left with an important philosophical question: Do all human beings regardless of size, level of development, environment, or degree of dependency have an equal right to life? Pro-life Christians contend that human beings are valuable in virtue of the kind of thing they are, creatures endowed by their Creator with an unalienable right to life. That right to life comes to be when they come to be.

The pro-life case for human equality is grounded in the substance view of human persons. Substances are living organisms that maintain their identities through time, while property things, such as cars and machinery, do not. What moves a puppy to maturity or a fetus to an adult is not an external collection of parts but an internal, defining nature or essence. As a substance develops, it does not become more of its kind but matures according to its kind. It remains what it is from the moment it begins to exist. Consequently, a substance functions in light of what it is and maintains its identity even if its ultimate capacities are never realized due to disability or injury.

Most critics of the pro-life position reject the substance view of human persons outlined above. Instead, they ground human rights and human equality in one's ability to immediately exercise certain capacities that embryos and fetuses, in virtue of their immature stage of development, cannot yet immediately exercise. In other words, they merely assert that certain traits are necessary for personhood but never say or prove why these supposedly value-giving properties are value-giving in the first place. In the end, the property view of human value is ad hoc and arbitrary. Why is some development needed? And why is this particular degree of development, self-awareness, the morally relevant factor rather than another? These questions are left unanswered.

### **Religion and the Pro-Life Position**



Although the pro-life view is implicitly religious, it is no more religious than alternative explanations about human value and human rights. Most people claim to believe that all humans are equal. If they truly believe that, we need only use science to show the unborn is a human being and their belief about equality should compel them to accept the pro-life view.

Opponents of the pro-life view believe that human beings who are in a different location or have a different level of development do not deserve the protection of law. They assert, without justification, the belief that strong and independent humans have basic human rights while small and dependent ones do not. This view is elitist. It violates the principle that once made political liberalism great, a commitment to protect the most vulnerable members of the human community.

In sharp contrast, pro-life advocates contend that no human being, regardless of size, level of development, environment, degree of dependency, race, gender, or place of residence, should be excluded from the human family. In other words, our view of humanity is inclusive, indeed wide-open to all, especially those who are small, vulnerable, and defenceless.

### **Ground Rules for the Debate**

**Objective Moral Truth:** When pro-life advocates claim that elective abortion unjustly takes the life of a defenceless human being, they are not saying they dislike abortion. They are saying it's objectively wrong, regardless of how one feels about it.

**Moral Neutrality:** Moral neutrality is impossible. Both sides of the abortion controversy bring prior metaphysical commitments to the debate. Why, then, is it okay for liberals to legislate their metaphysical views on the status of the unborn but not okay for pro-lifers to legislate theirs?

**Does God Matter, Or Are We Just Matter?:** Even if the pro-life view cannot be fully explained without explicit reference to Christian faith, it does not follow that the pro-life view is inherently irrational. Christian theists make rational arguments for their position, and it's wrong for materialists to simply presume the truth of their position.

**Does The Bible Justify Abortion?:** We don't need Scripture to expressly say that elective abortion is wrong before we can know that it's wrong. The Bible affirms that all humans have value because they bear God's image. The facts of science make clear that from the earliest stages of development, the unborn are unquestionably human. Hence, biblical commands against the unjust taking of human life apply to the unborn just as they do to other human beings.

### **Objections to the Pro-Life View**

**Asking the Right Questions:** When we hit a blocker in a conversation, we should ask a good question. The results can transform the discussion and put us back in the driver's seat, where we belong. These include:

"What do you mean by that?"

"How did you come to that conclusion?" ("Why do you believe that?"; "How do you know that?"; "What are your reasons for thinking you're right?")

"Have you considered . . . ?" Then finish the sentence in a way relevant to the issue at hand. Here we are offering an alternative view that gently dismantles your opponent's case or, at the very least, exposes a serious flaw in his reasoning.

**Objection 1: The Coat Hanger - Women will die from illegal abortions:** Every death from abortion is a tragedy we mourn. But why should the law be faulted for making it more risky for one human to take the life of another completely innocent one?

**Objection 2: Tolerance - It's intolerant to impose your view on others:** Next time somebody says you shouldn't impose your beliefs on others, ask, "Why not?" Any answer he gives will be an example of his imposing his beliefs on you!

**Objection 3: Single Issue - Pro-Lifers should broaden their focus:** How does it follow that because pro-life advocates oppose the unjust killing of innocent human beings, they must therefore take personal responsibility for solving all of life's ills? If pro-life advocates want to win debates over abortion, we must stay focused like a laser beam on the central question: What is the unborn? The people calling for pro-lifers to broaden their efforts are not our friends. They are a distraction from the real issue.

**Objection 4: Hard Cases - What about rape and incest?:** How should we treat innocent human beings who remind us of a painful event? That single question clarifies everything.

**Objection 5: I Don't Like You - You can't get pregnant, and other personal attacks:** Even if pro-lifers are the worst people in the world, others must still refute their arguments. Anything less is intellectually dishonest.

**Objection 6: Bodily Autonomy – It's my body, I'll decide:** Does a mother have no more duty to her own child than she does to a total stranger who is unnaturally hooked up to her? The central claim in this objection is that pregnant mothers have an absolute right to do whatever they want with their bodies regardless of what it does to the children they carry. This argument is particularly popular among pro-choice advocates in Ireland today. There are a number of issues with this argument and the related analogies (such as the "life support patient" analogy):

- First, we may not have the obligation to sustain strangers who are unnaturally plugged into us, but we do have a duty to sustain our own offspring.
- Second, the child is not an intruder. He is precisely where he naturally belongs at that point in his development. If the child doesn't belong in the mother's womb, where does he belong?
- Third, abortion is not merely the withholding of support. It is also the deliberate killing of a child through dismemberment, poison, or crushing.
- Fourth, barring cases of rape, a woman cannot claim that she bears no responsibility for the pregnancy in the same way she bears no responsibility for patient in the "life support" analogy.
- Fifth, pregnancy, unlike the "life support" analogy, is not a prison bed.
- Sixth, unlike the "life support" analogy, the mother-child relationship is not parasitical. A parasite is an alien being who should not be present. The mother's child was conceived with her own flesh and blood and is where he naturally belongs at that stage in his development. True, a child who is breast-feeding draws nourishment from another person, but this relationship can hardly be called parasitical. This is because the child's relation to the mother is indeed a proper one.

The bodily rights argument is compelling if and only if a pregnant woman's right to control her own body is absolute, meaning she can do whatever she wants with her body regardless of the impact on her unborn offspring. In fact, while the mother's claim to bodily autonomy is important, it is not absolute and does not supersede her obligation to the child.

According to these arguments and analogies, moral obligations to one's own offspring are consensual or

voluntary. This is a strange response. Moral obligations, by their very nature, are non-consensual. That's precisely what makes them moral obligations. So the question becomes, what moral obligation does a mother have to her own child? Put another way, is there a proper moral expectation that a mother provide life-sustaining care for her offspring? The assumption of bodily autonomy proponent, that parental responsibilities toward one's offspring are voluntary, is at best odd and at worst monstrous.

### **Equipping God's People to Engage the Culture**

Pro-life Christians contend that although humans differ in their respective degrees of development, they are nonetheless equal because they share a common human nature that bears the image of their Creator. Humans have value simply because they are human. This biblically informed pro-life view explains human equality, human rights, and moral obligations better than its secular rivals.

When human nature is up for grabs, pastors committed to biblical truth must commit themselves to four vitally important tasks.

- First, he preaches a biblical view of human value and applies that view to abortion, embryonic stem cell research, and cloning.
- Second, he equips his people to engage the culture with a persuasive defence of the pro-life view .
- Third, he restores lost passion for ministry with cross-centred preaching.
- Fourth, he confronts his own fears about preaching inconvenient truth.

My detailed summary of the book is available here: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1pDR...>

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### **Alan says**

Before now, I've never read an official pro-life apologetic. It was definitely worth the read to gather a scientific, philosophic, and theological outlook on the matters of abortion in support of the pro-life movement. There was material in this book that I had never considered before. For example, Klusendorf highlights the primary question of the abortion issue, 'are the unborn human?' If so, we shouldn't be killing the unborn. If not, then there is nothing morally wrong with abortion. Clearly, Klusendorf makes the case that the unborn are human and provides an extremely well articulated and thoughtful outlook on how to show that the pro-life case is the strongest position to take. I'd encourage all of my friends to spend time reading this book and absorbing its message, particularly my friends with a secular outlook on life that tend to hold a pro-abortion position. It may turn out that you align more with the pro-life position than you thought.

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### **Rachel says**

This is an excellent resource for anybody who wishes to learn more about the pro-life movement and how to engage culture effectively. The arguments are well researched and well thought out. I learned a lot from reading this book and thought that the author wrote it in a way that is very accessible even to those with very little knowledge of the pro-life movement or abortion. This is a read that you will not regret, it is very relevant to current culture and useful for every believer. I definitely recommend this book.

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**Anna Marie says**

Thought provoking. Not only does this book talk about the Christian perspective of this controversial topic, but it also questions the moral relativity present in society today.

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**Randy Alcorn says**

Scott Klusendorf has produced a marvelous resource that will equip pro-lifers to communicate more creatively and effectively as they engage our culture. The Case for Life is well-researched, well-written, logical, and clear, containing many pithy and memorable statements. Those already prolife will be equipped, those on the fence will likely be persuaded. Readers looking to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves will find much here to say. I highly recommend this book.

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