



Hunting for Answers

Update from Jacob Burow - March 2014



“I think all life has equal value.”

“Emily,” a student at Arizona State University, was pro-choice and defending her view that abortion is acceptable because the unborn cannot think like you and I can. I asked if that meant that anything that can think, such as a squirrel, has the same value, and she answered yes.

“So if a squirrel has the same value and right to life that you and I have, should I be legally charged with anything for running over a squirrel with my motorcycle?” I asked.

“No. It was an accident.”

“Should I be charged with anything if I hit and kill a toddler with my motorcycle?”

“No, that would be an accident, too.”

Whenever people tell me that all life is equal, I like to show them the implications of that view. Sometimes, in order to save their view, they will say strange sounding things like Emily did. How can one say that hitting and killing a toddler should not be actionable? Emily had already said that we shouldn't prosecute running over squirrels, so to be consistent on her view that all life is equal she had to say we shouldn't prosecute hitting a toddler either. The other way she could have responded and been consistent in her view would have been to say that I should be charged with the same kind of crime for killing either the toddler or the squirrel. Then I took a different tact with Emily.

“I recently went hunting and shot a deer. I skinned and gutted the deer, and then I made

sausage out of the meat and ate it. Do you think I should be charged with the same kind of crime that a person would be for having done the same thing to a young girl?” I said. She paused to consider carefully.

“No.”

Finally she began to realize that we cannot treat all life equally. When it comes to the particular example of hunting and eating, we know that it is not just wrong, but horrible to treat a human being the same way that we treat a deer.

Some people have convinced themselves that all life is of equal value, but I think their moral intuition will tell them differently when confronted with the implications of that view, as I've shown in this conversation. Deep down most people share the view that humans are more valuable, in some sense, than animals.

Highlighting the distinctions between animals and humans can be helpful when making the equal rights argument. It helps to illustrate that people are valuable not because of the things they can do or simply because they are alive, but

because of what they are: human beings made in the image of God. Read more about the equal rights argument in my newsletters from [October 2013](#), and [December 2013](#).

Helping pro-life people articulate things like this is a strong passion of mine. Thank you for your prayers and support as I do this work!



“Emily” and I at Arizona State University discussing human value

Jacob Burow