

The Value of Human Life

(The Sanctity of Life)

Today, we are going to address a subject – an issue really – that many of us would rather avoid... For various reasons, many Christians stay away from any conversation that addresses the question; when does life begin? – or the issues of abortion, end of life issues, or euthanasia...

Why is that? Why are Christians intimidated into silence when it comes to one of the most important issues that every modern society must settle?

I think the answer can be seen in an experiment that the Apologist-Evangelist Michael Ramsden speaks of... Suppose you were in a public restaurant surrounded by complete strangers – who were all listening in on a conversation that I was having with another person... Suppose that person openly asked me if I believed that abortion is wrong – and I confidently answered – *Yes!*... Then suppose you watched me go around the room and began to ask people what that thought of me and what kind of person I am for having stated the fact that abortion is wrong... What would be some of the answers you would hear to that question?... The answers would include such statements as; “*You’re a bigot, intolerant, narrow-minded, misogynistic hater of women*”... Is that not the prevailing attitude toward those who would call themselves “pro-life”?... And who wants to be labeled with such negative, untruthful terms?... So, we become timid and unassuming in matters that we should be kind and yet bold about...

If you are one here today that shares the popular view that being “pro-choice”, or pro-abortion – is the right position to hold – I would like to ask you hear this message today with at least an openness to hear biblical reasons why Christians are indeed pro-life... You will not hear terms of *hatred, ridicule, or shame* against you as a person... In fact, I am praying that you will personally experience nothing but love and a sincere appeal that is intended for you to seriously consider simple Biblical reasoning for why you too should become a defender of the innocent lives...

Why is a message like this even necessary?... It is because, in our current American culture – life has become indisputably cheap!...

There are two specific practices happening every day in this nation that prove this claim:

- The first, and perhaps most prominent is **abortion**. Abortion in all forms is not only legal – but is defended by those in even the highest levels of government, the academy, and just about every entertainment platform in this country... If fact, if you oppose the practice of abortion, you are ridiculed, dismissed and deemed extremely judgmental and unworthy to even express your reasons in any public platform...
- The second practice that demonstrates our culture’s popular attitude toward life is euthanasia... Euthanasia – the legal termination of life – is usually referred to by its euphemism – “*mercy killing*”... There is even more dangerous language being adopted that is designed to disguise the practice of euthanasia – and that is the phrase – “*death with dignity*”... Now, to be clear the phrase “*death with dignity*” is a red-flag, only when active means of hastening someone’s death is being employed to “help someone die”... It is NOT euthanasia when the decision is made to stop extraordinary means to sustain life and provide simple palliative care...

Organizations like Planned Parenthood – the leading provider of abortions, , and the Hemlock Society – which is a proponent of suicide – are both on the offensive... They are succeeding in deceiving this culture, and even many Christians into adopting their reasoning for supporting a culture of death...

Why is it that even Christians are adopting these attitudes toward death in our culture? I believe the reason that Christians mistakenly advocate these forms of murder is that they rely on human reasoning and emotions rather than on the truths God has revealed in His Word...

The confusion that many people have about the termination of life – is due to a simple ignorance of the origin of life...

What is the origin of human kind?... If you are to believe the only view that is being taught in our public schools – from elementary through the university – then you would believe that people are no more than then accidental, result of eons of purposeless evolution on the macro scale...

Should we really be surprised when people act like animals – when that is all they have been taught that they are?...

Can abortion or euthanasia really be wrong if the human race is merely the result of purposeless,

accidental mutation of cells?...

The devaluing of human life is the result of evolutionary philosophy and humanistic religion – that permeates popular thinking today...

The Christian knows that such philosophies are not only wrong – but they are dangerous... How can we know that? Because God Himself has told us the truth!

Though there are many places in God's Word we could turn that help us understand God's perspective in these matters – we will limit our observation to primarily two passages: Genesis 1:24-31, and Romans 5:6-8.

Genesis 1:24-31 provides us with an accurate and exalted view of our worth in the eyes and heart of the God Who made us...

God's Word gives us the truth that should lead us to be the strongest advocates for the value of human life today...

Let's look to this passage, with open and teachable hearts and may the Lord so equip us to be witnesses of these great truths for the balance of our lives...

Consider first, that –

1. The Value of Human Life is Rooted in the Creative Act of God (Gen. 1:24-27)

²⁴ Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind"; and it was so. ²⁵ God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷ God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

The primary reason that the human race is valuable and that every individual life has meaning, is that God created men and women differently than He created every other thing or being... We are created uniquely in the image of God. Humans are image-bearers of God...

The creation narrative found in the early chapters of Genesis, makes several distinctions very plain: **First, God is distinct from His creation. Some mistakenly teach that God is in the flowers, the trees, the wind, or all nature... New age mysticism is really just a revival of old age paganism and pantheism.**

Paul warns against this in Rom. 1:21-25.

We dare not worship the creation – nor confuse it with the Creator... We should enjoy and manage God's wonderful handiwork – but we must exalt and worship Him alone above that which He spoke into being...

God is distinct from His creation.

Secondly, Humanity is distinct from all other created life. There is no hint of evolutionary descent in the Biblical text. To the contrary, it is specifically ruled out. God created the animal kingdom, then He created man in His own image. Those who suggest that the creation account can be interpreted to mean humans evolved from some other species are directly opposed to the text... You simply can not do enough hermeneutical gymnastics to justify some kind of theistic-evolution theory that attempts to marry together two diametrically opposed views of the origin of human beings...

For man to be a descendant of the animal kingdom rather than a special act of creation, God would have had to allow death before there was any sin... *Survival-of-the-fittest* and the macro-evolutionary model are dependent on death, disease, and the struggle for survival... But the Bible clearly teaches that death entered the world only after Adam sinned (Rom. 5:12-14)... If God allowed death into the world before man's rebellion against Him, then He did so cruelly and without

rhyme or reason – which is totally against God’s character... No, God created man totally distinct from the animal world and even gave him dominion over it (Gen. 1:25-26).

God Alone has authority over human life.

The significance of these contrasts can hardly be overemphasized. If God is the author of human life, He alone has the right to take it or to dictate the terms under which it may be taken...

I submit that just as horribly ashamed we should be about our nation’s history regarding slavery – that there is coming a day when our descendants will be as ashamed of us for tolerating such a low view of the value of life in our day...

John Piper – “The abortion industry kills as many Black people every four days as the Klan killed in 150 years.” (John Piper, Twitter Nov. 20, 2009)

God trusts to man the responsibility for the stewardship of animal life – but human life is subject only to God Himself... Any sin against human life is a sin against God Himself – an affront to His image.

If the human race is distinct from the animal world, then no individual life, born or unborn, young or old, healthy or infirm, should be deemed as anything less than a special creation of God that reflects His image.

Humans are accountable to their Creator.

Because of creation, my life has design and I must respond in surrender to its Creator. God made this world and all that is in it. As the Designer, He knows how it should work. HE alone determines right and wrong, not the culture nor the era...

Our views of right and wrong and the sanctity of life must be derived from Him and from His revealed Word... Because God alone is the author of life, it is wrong for an individual to take an active part in taking innocent life.

We value human life because – human life is rooted in the creative act of God... Secondly –

2. The Value of Human Life is Displayed in the Complementary Act of God (Gen. 1:28)

²⁸ God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Another distinction that God made is the difference between male and female (:27). This complementary difference is highlighted in Gen. 2:21-25. With the creation of the woman, God gave this first couple the command to be fruitful and multiply. The reproduction of life is clearly God’s will. The problems with hunger and poverty that are rampant in the world today are the results of mismanagement, false religions, and disobedience to God - not mere overpopulation, which some use to justify abortion. God’s revealed will in the Biblical text is life and reproduction, not murder and disregard for the sanctity of life.

God made men and women different that He might make them one, and then through them that He might have a godly line (Mal. 2:15). He breathed into Adam the breath of life, and Adam became a living soul. Unlike the animals, man is an eternal being. Though his body will grow old and die, there is a spirit within man that will live forever. That eternity is passed on at conception because at the very first moment, as a result of the image of God in both men and women, that child also carries the image of God.

The text conclusively teaches that the sexes have equal value, though men and women have different forms and functions. The difference between men and women should never be treated as differences in worth or intrinsic value, yet the differences in our roles should be celebrated and enjoyed as gifts from God. Women, for instance, can bear children, while men typically have greater physical strength. It is sad that abortion proponents do not speak out against the horrible practice of abortion for sex selection. Some couples who are trying for a child of a particular sex will be tested and actually abort the child of it is not the desired sex. Tragically, in cultures where abortions are performed solely based on the sex of the child, it is most often the female baby that is aborted.

One wonders why this ultimate form of sex discrimination is overlooked by those who passionately defend the so-called rights of women to terminate their pregnancy by abortion... Part of sanctity of life

is having confidence in a God who made us the way we are and gives us the children He wants us to have. It is tragic that convenience and selfishness are valued more highly than life itself. Because of the creation of male and female, my life has duty, and I must respond in satisfaction of how He made me and what He made me to be. God's love for humanity is revealed in His special preparation of the two sexes and their complementary union.

We see the value of human life in God's creative act and His complementary act – and we see –

3. The Value of Human Life is Seen in the Hierarchical Assignment of God (Gen. 1:29-31)

²⁹ Then God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; ³⁰ and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food"; and it was so. ³¹ God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. God demonstrated His special love for humankind when He placed us above all created order in our world... God gave humans dominion over the animals as well as giving us the blessing of the plant world too...

In the world there is a created order. Humanity clearly stands above that order.

This does not allow us to abuse or mismanage God's creation. On the contrary – we are to be stewards of what God so skillfully made and graciously provided... We are not to worship that creation – but we are to care for that creation.

A still greater error is made today when some actually value plant or animal life *above* human life...

One rarely sees animal rights activists who also campaign against abortion. Some who refuse to eat meat based on "animal rights" will also argue that a woman has the right to kill her own offspring that live in her womb.

There can be no doubt in Genesis 1 that man and woman are not only distinct from the rest of creation, but that God the Creator actually placed them *over* it. For this reason human life is indisputably sacred in the eyes of God – and is raised above all other forms of life.

Because God made humanity to have dominion over the rest of the world – we should accept that our lives have value, direction and responsibility... We are to be stewards of all that God has placed within our power – which includes our lives, and the lives of those within our care...

Finally – we need to see that –

4. The Value of Human Life is Central in the Saving Act of God

Rom. 5:6-8 (NASB)

⁶ For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. The greatest proof of the sanctity of human life is as simple and profound as John 3:16. Almost as soon as Adam and Eve sinned against Him, God promised to send His Seed to bruise the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). God's love for the human race is unquestionably demonstrated by the fact that He became one of us!

While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). Human life is so important to God that He sent His Son that we might live with Him forever.

We were made in the image of God, and that gives every human being great value. There is a greater value, however, than that inherent in creation. The highest life is found in the new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). Jesus did not come to save the vegetation or the animal life of this planet. He came to mankind, becoming one of us, taking upon Himself the sins of all who would trust in Him. We are twice His, first by creation and then by the new birth.

Because Jesus became flesh and blood, wrapping Himself in human form, dying on the cross for my sin,

and rising from the grave for my justification, my life has distinction, and I must respond in submission to whatever He asks of me.

Human life is sacred. I must use the life God has given me to serve Him, but I must so highly value other lives that I protect and nurture them as well...

The highest value a Christian can place on life is to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with others. If any life is cheapened then all life is cheapened, and that is ultimately an outrage to the Creator Himself.

Questions to consider in Community Group:

- Do you find it difficult to enter into conversations concerning abortion, or end-of-life issues? If so, what makes it so difficult?
- Have you noticed how often those who support “abortion rights” are referred to as “pro-choice”, while those who are “pro-life” are referred to as “anti-abortion rights”? Why would so-called non-biased news reporting not use the terms that each camp prefer to use to refer to themselves?
- What should a Christian’s attitude be toward those who are “pro-choice”?
- Why is the “creation” a credible argument for being “pro-life” (or even “anti-abortion”, or “anti-euthanasia”)? Why is being image-bearers of God, important to our understanding of the sanctity of human life?
- Why should the “complementarian” view be considered as a defense for the protection of the unborn?
- Why is abortion and end-of-life issues considered by many to be merely political and not theological?
- Is being pro-life and pro-capital punishment a contradiction in the value of human life? Why, or why not?
- What are reasons offered by those in the pro-choice camp for their support of such views? How should Christians respond to the issues often cited as “valid reasons” for abortion and euthanasia?
- What can we do as a church to protect the unborn and infirm?
- What can we do as a church to elevate the value of human life in our culture?