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Honor Life



QUESTION 1:

What are some ways you show others they are valued?

THE POINT

Respect human life
as God does.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Ask anyone with little knowledge of what the Bible teaches, and he's likely to mention one of the Ten Commandments, especially the one about killing. You may have seen a TV courtroom drama where someone shouted at the accused murderer, "Thou shalt not kill!" Or perhaps the defense lawyer used it as a reason not to put the condemned person to death.

It's almost universally accepted that killing others is wrong, but cultures and governments legislate different ways to interpret that. Life—and the value of

life—has never been more debated than they have in recent years. Whether the topic is late-term abortions, euthanasia, or human-trafficking, life is demanding to be noticed and defended.

As we will see in this session, the Bible is clear: life begins at the moment of conception and retains its value from the womb to the tomb. All life. Unfortunately, believers within the body of Christ have not always agreed on this, and we have failed to unify on this all-important area. But God wants us to realize that all life is valuable. We are to see life as He sees life.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

EXODUS 20:13

¹³ **Do not murder.**

Human life is precious to God—and it should be precious to us. Yet we often give in to the false notion that, just because we do not take part in physical murder ourselves, we are above this command: “Do not murder.”

Jesus made it clear in His teaching in the Sermon on the Mount that murder can take other forms. We also are not to destroy another’s life through hate or defamation.

Hatred and defamation typically come rooted in bitterness and unforgiveness. When we allow these two things to fester in our lives, it produces a damaging stench of death. Left unattended, it not only affects others around us in many ways but can also lead to our own spiritual and emotional death.

QUESTION 2:

What are some ways our society devalues human life?

Christ has called us to live a life of love. When you and I live absent of love for God and one another, we are living in disobedience to God’s highest command: to love.

Yet, love becomes difficult to experience in the stench of unforgiveness. Kind words become biting criticisms. Giving gestures begin to be tied to demands in return. The debris of rotting regret, shame, anger, and doubt flood the air producing difficulties in

relationships, careers, ministry, and virtually every other sphere of life. That's why finding the ability to forgive is about so much more than forgiving the person who hurt you, or even forgiving yourself for what you now regret. It's also about regaining the life God intended for you. All human life is precious—including your own. When you choose to remain bitter, you are also hurting yourself. As has been said, bitterness is an acid meant for someone else, but instead it eats you alive.

We all know people who seem to overreact to issues that come their way. They overreact because hatred and bitterness are rotting the soul, causing those issues to be tender. This points back to Jesus' words on murder.

Our hate is a form of murder of the other person, but it also affects our own lives negatively. To release any hatred and bitterness, look to the cross and what Jesus did for you. We are all even at the foot of the cross. Jesus died to forgive you, but He also died for the ones you're tempted to murder with hate.

QUESTION 3:

What are some benefits for society when we value human life?

1 SAMUEL 26:7-11

⁷ That night, David and Abishai came to the troops, and Saul was lying there asleep in the inner circle of the camp with his spear stuck in the ground by his head. Abner and the troops were lying around him. ⁸ Then Abishai said to David, "Today God has delivered your enemy to you. Let me thrust the spear through him into the ground just once. I won't have to strike him twice!" ⁹ But David said to Abishai, "Don't destroy him, for who can lift a hand against the LORD's anointed and be innocent?" ¹⁰ David added, "As the LORD lives, the LORD will certainly strike him down: either his day will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish. ¹¹ However, because of the LORD, I will never lift my hand against the LORD's anointed. Instead, take the spear and the water jug by his head, and let's go."

QUESTION 4:

What do David's words and actions reveal about his relationship with God?

VALUE FOR LIFE

God values all human life. As His children, we reflect His character when we value all human life as well. List some ways you see our culture devaluing life and some ways we as Christians can intervene.

Culture

Church

Unborn children:

The elderly:

The handicapped:

Minorities:

Immigrants:

Genders:

Other:

“The difference between the way of life and the way of death is great. Therefore, do not murder a child by abortion or kill a newborn infant.”

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Although Saul was currently the king, it was clear that God's hand was on David and he would become king. Saul not only stood in the way of David's rightful ascension to the throne, but he had also made it his mission to make sure David would never become king.

On this night, as Saul and his men slept, David was nearby. Circumstances were definitely in David's favor; here was an opportunity to easily kill Saul if he chose to do so. Based on Saul's actions against David, many people would not have condemned David if he took Saul's life. It would be seen as an act of war or self-defense: "Kill or be killed."

But David knew better. David knew that to lift a hand against the Lord's anointed would leave a stain of bloodshed and guilt on his own life. So David chose instead to take the spear and the water jug by Saul's head to let Saul know how easily he could have killed him.

David's choice to honor life shows up clearly in this account. Life is sacred. No one has the right to take a life other than the Creator of life Himself: God. The reason why none of us has the right to take another life is because we are each made in the image of God.

God made a critically important statement to Noah, which helps inform the foundation of life's sacredness: "Whoever sheds human blood, by humans his blood will be shed, for God made humans in his image" (Gen. 9:6). The willful shedding of human blood is murder. The reason why the unauthorized taking of life is wrong is not merely because it is an attack against another person; it is also an attack on God. Murder attacks God by assaulting the epitome of His creation.



Humanity was made in the image of God. To destroy humanity is to declare war on God. Every life is held in God's hands. The Lord determines who lives and who dies. To decide whether or not someone lives or dies is to step into a role that only God has the authority to do. We don't create life, and we cannot choose to take life.

David's refusal to take Saul's life acknowledged God's ultimate authority over life and death. He left the matter in God's hands. "As the LORD lives, the LORD will certainly strike him down: either his day will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish. However, because of the LORD, I will never lift my hand against the LORD's anointed" (vv. 10-11a).

As kingdom disciples, we must not grow complacent in a world where life continues to be devalued. We have been called to speak up for the lives of others—including the most vulnerable—in any and every way that we can.

1 SAMUEL 26:22-25

²² David answered, “Here is the king’s spear; have one of the young men come over and get it.” ²³ The LORD will repay every man for his righteousness and his loyalty. I wasn’t willing to lift my hand against the LORD’s anointed, even though the LORD handed you over to me today. ²⁴ Just as I considered your life valuable today, so may the LORD consider my life valuable and rescue me from all trouble.” ²⁵ Saul said to him, “You are blessed, my son David. You will certainly do great things and will also prevail.” Then David went on his way, and Saul returned home.

Every single life bears the stamp of God. Granted, we have marred that image through our sinfulness, but His image is stamped in each of us. This reality gives life its value. This truth ought to dictate not only how we view and treat ourselves but also how we view and treat others. We are to respect life by treating every life as equally valuable. David modeled this in his interaction with Saul.

Saul had a momentary heart change. He called David his son and spoke of great things that David would go on to accomplish. In fact, David’s refusal to kill Saul when he had the chance encouraged Saul to return home and stop the chase, at least for the time being.

David displayed an attitude that valued life. Throughout much of his life, David modeled words the prophet Micah would speak centuries later: “Mankind, he has told each of you what is good and what it is the LORD requires of you: to act justly, to love faithfulness, and to walk humbly with your God” (Mic. 6:8). Consider how we can live out this truth in how we honor all life:

- ▶ Acting justly includes doing so toward the vulnerable, seeking to protect their lives.
- ▶ Loving faithfulness involves consistently and faithfully pursuing life and liberty for those who are at risk of losing both.
- ▶ Walking humbly means we consider others more important than ourselves.

When we do these three things, we will both honor and value life as God intended. We will also position ourselves for the blessings and rewards that come from doing so, as we witnessed in David’s own situation with Saul.

QUESTION 5:

What are some practical ways we can lift up the value of life before others?



LIVE IT OUT

How will you actively seek to show value to all life? Choose one of the following applications:

- ▶ **Check your attitude.** If you privately consider some people more important than others, confess that to God and repent. While the world deems countless people as inferior or less important, we are called to see all people as God sees them.
- ▶ **Check your words.** Examine your involvement in devaluing life through the words you speak to others or about others. Words of anger, malice, bitterness, or even apathy do not honor the lives of those God loves, so repent and determine to speak only that which lifts up.
- ▶ **Check your actions.** Look for concrete ways you can affirm the value of life in your spheres of influence. Practical actions can include counseling at a pro-life pregnancy center, helping a parent with a disabled child, or bringing joy to the forgotten in a nursing home.

All life has value. It's up to each of us to validate and affirm this value in what we think, say, and do. This requires us to get out of our comfort zones and be more active in affirming the value of life—just as God has commanded.