

WHAT'S THE WORD?

Truth In An Uncertain World

What's the Word?

- Our society faces major challenges.
- Followers of Jesus are called to be “salt and light” in society.
- The culture is talking about many significant topics.
- What does the Bible say about these topics?

Next Week's Topic

Politics & Government

Today's Topic

The Value of Life

Genesis 1

In the beginning God created the
heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1:1

בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ

Who made all this?

- Creation was the voluntary choice of a sovereign, eternal God.
- God created the physical realm and the spiritual realm, He is beyond all those things.
- The first verse in the Bible is a fork in the road -- a path with a belief in an all-powerful God or a path of depending upon a series of cosmic accidents.
- The Hebrew verb *bara* בָּרָא (created) is used only of God in the Bible. When people create something (poem, art) another verb is used. This verb applies to creation “ex nihilo” (Latin for “something from nothing”).

Who made all this? Scripture says...

- For behold, He who forms mountains and creates the wind and declares to man what are His thoughts, He who makes dawn into darkness and treads on the high places of the earth, the Lord God of hosts is His name. Amos 4:13
- For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited), “I am the Lord, and there is none else.” Isaiah 45:18
- The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Psalm 19:1
- Let the glory of the Lord endure forever; let the Lord be glad in His works; Psalm 104:31

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.” God created (*bara בָּרָא*) man in His own image, in the image of God He created (*bara בָּרָא*) him; male and female He created (*bara בָּרָא*) them. Genesis 1:26-27

Image of God

Imago Dei

Human life was created in the image of God (*b'tzelmo Elohim* בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים in Hebrew). This image was imparted only to humans (Genesis 2:7).

“Image” (*tzelem צֶלֶם*) is used figuratively here, for God does not have a human form. Being in God’s image means that humans share, though imperfectly and finitely, in God’s nature, that is, in His communicable attributes (life, personality, truth, wisdom, love, holiness, justice), and so have the capacity for spiritual fellowship with Him.

Will I choose to worship God the Creator?

For thus says the Lord, who created
(*bara* בָּרָא) the heavens (He is the God who
formed the earth and made it, He established
it and did not create (*bara* בָּרָא) it a waste
place, but formed it to be inhabited),

“I am the Lord, and there is none else.”

Isaiah 45:18

If I choose to worship God the Creator, how can that guide my daily life and choices?

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Be **devoted to one another** in brotherly love; **give preference to one another** in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality. Romans 12:9-13

Why is human life valuable?

The phrase “sanctity of life” reflects the belief that, because people are made in God’s image (Genesis 1:26–27), human life has an inherently sacred attribute that should be protected and respected at all times. While God gave humanity the authority to kill and eat other forms of life (Genesis 9:3), the murdering of other human beings is expressly forbidden, with the penalty being death (Genesis 9:6).

Humanity was created in God’s image, but sin has corrupted that image. There is nothing inherently sacred in fallen man. The sanctity of human life is not due to the fact that we are such wonderful and good beings. The only reason the sanctity of life applies to humanity is the fact that God created us in His image and set us apart from all other forms of life. Although that image has indeed been marred by sin, His image is still present in humanity. We are like God, and that likeness means that human life is always to be treated with dignity and respect.

The sanctity of life means that humanity is more sacred than the rest of creation. Human life is not holy in the same sense that God is holy. Only God is holy in and of Himself. Human life is only holy in the sense of being “set apart” from all other life created by God. Many apply the sanctity of life to issues like abortion and euthanasia, and, while it definitely applies to those issues, it applies to much more. The sanctity of life should motivate us to combat all forms of evil and injustice that are perpetuated against human life. Violence, abuse, oppression, human trafficking, and many other evils are also violations of the sanctity of life.

Why is human life valuable?

Because it is a sacred gift that can only come from God

- “Know that the Lord Himself is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture.” Psalm 100:3
- “But now, O Lord, You are our Father, we are the clay, and You our potter; and all of us are the work of Your hand.” Isaiah 64:8

When is human life valuable?

When is human life valuable?

At conception

- “Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, ‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.’” Jeremiah 1:4-5

When is human life valuable?

At conception

- When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby [later named John the Baptizer] leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And she cried out with a loud voice and said, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy.” Luke 1:41-44

When is human life valuable?

At conception

- “For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth. Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.” Psalm 139:13-16

- Around 73 million induced abortions take place worldwide each year. 61% of all unintended pregnancies, and 29% of all pregnancies, end in induced abortion. - <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/abortion>
- Approximately 1 million abortions take place every year in the United States.
- Approximately 65 million abortions have been performed in the United States since Roe vs. Wade was passed in 1973.
- 65 million people is:
 - more than the population of Texas + Oklahoma + New York + Virginia
 - more than the population of Spain
 - more than the population of England
 - more than the population of Canada + Greece

When is human life valuable?

At birth

- Apostle Paul wrote, “But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles.” Galatians 1:15-16

Based upon today's cultural values, some might say that a child like Jesus of Nazareth, born to a poor unmarried teenager, should have been aborted.

Our Calling to Provide Grace and Hope to the Hurting

The first duty of Christians is to love and serve God. The second comes from it: to treat our neighbors like ourselves. This two-part mission is what drives most after-abortion healing counselors, therapists and volunteers. They recognize the pain that often leads women (and the men in their lives) to abortion, and the suffering that often follows. Rather than turn away, they are the Good Samaritans who help neighbors and strangers alike, seeking to be the loving hands of God for those who are suffering.

After-abortion counselors are truly following the two most important commandments. And new research indicates this work can help more people be even more effective by listening to people and meeting them where they are, like Jesus listening to the woman at the well and protecting the adulterer before sharing His healing truth.

- Janine Marron

WHAT'S THE
WORD?

When is human life valuable?

In childhood

- Behold, children are a gift of the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; they will not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate. Psalm 127:3-5

When is human life valuable?

In childhood

- Jesus said, “Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” Matthew 19:14
- Taking a child, He [Jesus] set him before them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them, “Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me.”

Mark 9:36-37

Followers of Jesus are called to help struggling parents after children are born

- Vindicate the weak and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and destitute. Psalm 82:3
- Learn to do good; seek justice, reprove the ruthless, defend the orphan, plead for the widow. Isaiah 1:17
- Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

James 1:27

Why should followers of Jesus support Adoption and Foster Care ministries?

- **Living out the Gospel:** It's a tangible way to show God's grace and love in a broken world, following Jesus' example of compassion and acceptance.
- **Modeling Christ:** It demonstrates the impact of the Gospel by bringing children from brokenness into loving, stable homes.
- **Mission Field at Home:** Foster care provides a unique opportunity to minister within one's own home and community.
- **Pro-Life Extension:** Many view it as an extension of the pro-life ethic, protecting vulnerable children within the foster system.

When is human life valuable?

In the “middle” years

- He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be answered.

Proverbs 21:13

- Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them out of the hand of the wicked. Psalm 82:4

Jesus said, “Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.’ Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.’” Matthew 25:34-40

In January 2024, over 770,000 people experienced homelessness in the U.S. on a single night, a record high driven by the housing affordability crisis, rising rents, and inflation, with significant increases seen in families with children and older adults, though veteran homelessness declined. Homelessness rose 18% from 2023 to 2024, with substantial jumps in both sheltered and unsheltered populations, straining services despite efforts to connect people with housing.

Statistics on Homelessness in America

- Total: Over 770,000 people (a 18% increase from 2023).
- Adults: Around 623,000.
- Children: Nearly 148,000 (a 33% increase from 2023).
- Families with Children: Increased by 25% in 2024

- <https://endhomelessness.org/state-of-homelessness/>

When is human life valuable?

At the end

- No man has authority to restrain the wind with the wind, or authority over the day of death; and there is no discharge in the time of war, and evil will not deliver those who practice it. Ecclesiastes 8:8
- Do not cast me off in the time of old age; do not forsake me when my strength fails. Psalm 71:9

We live in what is sometimes described as a “culture of death.” Abortion on demand has been practiced for decades. Now some are seriously proposing infanticide. Euthanasia, sometimes called “mercy killing,” is promoted as a viable means of solving various social and financial problems. This focus on death as an answer to the world’s problems is a total reversal of the biblical model. Death is an enemy (1 Corinthians 15:26). Life is a sacred gift from God (Genesis 2:7). When given the choice between life and death, God told Israel to “choose life” (Deuteronomy 30:19).

We know that physical death is inevitable for us mortals (Psalm 89:48; Hebrews 9:27). However, God alone is sovereign over when and how a person’s death occurs. Job testifies in Job 30:23, “I know you will bring me down to death, to the place appointed for all the living.” God has the final say over death (see 1 Corinthians 15:26, 54–56; Hebrews 2:9; 2:14–15; Revelation 21:4).

When is human life valuable?

At the end

- You shall not murder. Exodus 20:13
- There is an appointed time for everything.
And there is a time for every event under heaven— a time to give birth and a time to die; Ecclesiastes 3:1-2a

When is human life valuable?

In eternity

- For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23
- Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.” John 5:24
- And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. 1 John 5:11-12

When is human life valuable?

- At conception
- At birth
- In childhood
- In the “middle” years
- At the end
- In eternity

If all human life is valuable at all times, what should followers of Jesus do?

- Notice
- Pray
- Love
- Invite
- Welcome
- Serve
- Give
- Volunteer

If all human life is valuable to God, what can followers of Jesus do now?

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. **So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people**, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith. Galatians 6:7-10

Does every human life have value?

One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him [Jesus], saying, “Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!” But the other answered, and rebuking him said, “Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” And he was saying, “Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!” And He said to him, “Truly I say to you, **today you shall be with Me in Paradise.**” Luke 23:39-43