

SESSION 4  
Honor Life



**QUESTION 1:**

*What are some ways you show others they are valued?*

## THE POINT

Respect human life as God does.

## THE PASSAGES

Exodus 20:13; 1 Samuel 26:7-11,22-25

## 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 discussed and 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.

## Exodus 20:13

**13 Thou shalt not kill.**

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 actual, physical murder ourselves, we are above this four-word command: “Thou shalt not kill.”

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.

**“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire” (Matt. 5:21-22).**

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. He said, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another” (John 13:34). Anytime

you and I live absent of love for one another, we are living in disobedience to God's highest command.

Yet, love becomes difficult to give or experience in the stench of unforgiveness. 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 or hate others, you also are hurting yourself. As someone once said, bitterness is an acid meant for someone else, but instead it eats you alive.

Sure, when someone has sinned against you, it hurts; it is like a wound to your soul. We all know that a wound left untreated is an invitation for bacteria to grow. Over time, the infection only worsens. When you bump that wounded area against a table, the infected area is tender and you cry out in pain. The intense pain is not tied to the original wound but to the infection that grew.

A similar thing happens when someone sins against you and wounds you. The original issue may be fairly small, but when you allow hate or bitterness to remain, it grows; the wound festers and rots. Then, if someone else bumps you even in a slight way, you have created a situation where you overreact to that person.

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 alarmingly 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 in a negative way.

Treat your wounds. 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 So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him.**

**8 Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time.**

**9 And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless?**

**10 David said furthermore, As the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish.**

**11 The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD's anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that is at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go.**

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. Several years before this time, while David was in the palace with the king, "Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night" (1 Sam. 19:10). Ultimately, David fled into the surrounding country, but Saul chased after him.

Now on this night, as Saul and his three thousand 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. (Tragically, however, because of his own sin, David would later fail to remember the value of life as he killed Bathsheba’s husband, Uriah [2 Sam. 11:14-17].) 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 and sanctity: “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man” (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 a attack on God. Murder—at any stage of life—attacks God by assaulting the epitome of His creation.

Humanity was made in the image of God. To attack or destroy humanity is to declare war on God. Every life is held in God’s hands. “The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up” (1 Sam. 2:6). 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 liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish. The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD’s anointed.”

As kingdom disciples, we must not grow complacent in a world where life continues to be devalued and destroyed. We have been

called to speak up for the lives of others—including the helpless and most vulnerable—in any and every way that we can.

**QUESTION 4:**

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

---

**1 Samuel 26:22-25**

**22** And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear! and let one of the young men come over and fetch it.

**23** The LORD render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness; for the LORD delivered thee into my hand to day, but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the LORD's anointed.

**24** And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.

**25** Then Saul said to David, Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

Every single life bears the stamp of God. Granted, we have marred that image through our sinfulness, but His image is stamped in every human being. 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. David valued Saul's life, and he wanted Saul to do the same for him. "As thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation."

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.

Cancer is one of the debilitating diseases of our day. You know what cancer is? Cells that don't want to go with the program; they are deviant cells that have their own agenda. Now, this would be just fine—if they would leave your body. The problem with cancer is that these deviant cells still want to hang out inside you. They don't want to go anywhere. They just want to be independent. Cancer cells still want blood, they still want to eat, and they still want oxygen. In other words, they want to siphon off from the body, but they don't want to contribute to it because they want to grow. Not only do they want to grow, they also want to spread and metastasize; that is, they move into other parts of the body. Ultimately, the whole body is in trouble.

Cancer exists in the body of Christ as well. "Cells" of people in the church want the benefits for their own lives while failing to contribute to the rest of the body. When we think of honoring the lives of all people equally, we're challenged not simply to think of ourselves but to consider the plight of Christians not only locally and nationally, but also worldwide. Approximately a quarter of a billion believers around the world face significant religious persecution. Thousands die annually for their beliefs in Christ.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, according to the Guttmacher Institute, an estimated 56 million humans die annually through abortion.<sup>2</sup> To say that we have a life-crisis in this moment in history would be an understatement. The devaluing of life—and our complicit ignoring of this reality—is a cancer spreading through the church, the body of Christ.

David displayed an attitude that valued life. Throughout much of his life, David modeled words the prophet Micah would speak centuries later: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love



mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Mic. 6:8). Consider how we can live out this truth even as David did in how we honor all life:

1. To act justly includes acting justly toward the innocent and vulnerable and seeking to protect their lives.
2. To love mercy involves consistently and faithfully pursuing life and liberty for those who are at risk of losing both.
3. To walk humbly requires that we “esteem other better than themselves” (Phil. 2:3).

When we do these three things, we will both honor and value life as God intended for us to do. 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. As Saul said, “Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail.”

#### QUESTION 5:

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

### ENGAGE

*God values all human life. 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:

---

## LIVE IT OUT

How will you actively seek to show value to all life?

- ▶ **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 those words that build others up. (See Eph. 4:29.)
- ▶ **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, bringing joy to the forgotten in a nursing home, or engaging with the work of praying for and supporting the persecuted.



### END NOTES

<sup>1</sup> "Christian Persecution," Open Doors, <https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/>

<sup>2</sup> "Induced Abortion Worldwide: Global Incidence and Trends," Guttmacher Institute, March 2018, <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-worldwide>