

ALL ARE IMPORTANT

God values every life He creates. We must value and protect human life.

FIRST THOUGHT

Government leaders are discussing some important things believers must face today. These things are: 1. **Abortion**—killing a baby before it is born; 2. Euthanasia—killing people that are old, sick, or handicapped; 3. Assisted suicide—helping people kill themselves; and 4. Human trafficking—kidnapping and selling women and children to become sex slaves and child soldiers.

God hates these things. Believers must stand strong against them. They are now widespread and growing daily.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

In session six we learned about the things that happened to Paul and Silas in Philippi. Owners of a slave-girl dragged them to the city center. Officials beat them and threw them in jail.

In jail they sang praises to God. God sent an earthquake. The jail doors were opened. None of the prisoners tried to escape.

The jailer and his family were saved and baptized. Today's session explains the reason they were in jail.

EXPLORE THE TEXT (ACTS 16:16-19; PSALM 139:13-16)

1. Freedom Gained (Acts 16:16-18)

VERSE 16

¹⁶ Once, while we were going to the place for prayer, a servant girl met us. She had a special spirit in her, and she earned a lot of money for her owners by telling fortunes.

Luke wrote about three people in Philippi. One of those people was a slave girl. An evil spirit controlled her. It spoke through her to tell people about the future. The word Luke used to describe this girl's power was the same word used to describe false prophets in the Old Testament.

It was a real power from Satan. The girl earned money for her owners by using this power. They did not care about the girl. They were only interested in the money they got from her.

VERSE 17

¹⁷ This girl followed Paul and us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God. They are telling you how you can be saved."

She was telling the truth. Paul really was telling people how they could be saved. Notice that the verse says "she followed us." That means Luke was with Paul in Philippi. Luke was with Paul most of the time, but not all of the time.

Paul's group often went to the place where people prayed. The slave girl followed them everywhere. The evil spirit in her was a demon. It knew Paul and the others were God's servants.

VERSE 18

¹⁸ She kept this up for many days. This bothered Paul, so he turned and said to the spirit, "By the power of Jesus Christ, I command you to come out of her!" Immediately, the spirit came out.

The girl followed them for several days. Paul talked to people. The girl shouted at the same time. Paul became tired of her. The **Greek** word that Luke uses for bothered means very upset. It also means "angry" and "sad." Paul did not want people to link God's message of **salvation** with an evil spirit.

He was sad and angry that the girl was suffering. But her owners did not care about her. The only thing they cared about was money. They wanted her to earn money for them.

Finally, Paul decided to do something. This verse does not say he shouted at the spirit. He spoke to the evil spirit. He commanded the evil spirit to leave her. It left immediately. Paul did this "by the power of Jesus Christ." Some Bible versions say "in Jesus' name." Both phrases mean that Jesus Christ gave Paul the power to command the evil spirit to come out of the girl.

What organizations help people who are being used inappropriately by others for their own personal gain?

How can you, your group, or your church support these organizations?

2. The Complaint (Acts 16:19)

VERSE 19

¹⁹When the owners of the servant girl saw this, they knew that now they could not use her to make money. So they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them before the city rulers in the marketplace.

The owners of the slave girl realized they were going to lose money because the demon was gone out of her. She could no longer see in the future. They took Paul and Silas by force to the local authorities.

The girl's owners were very angry with Paul and Silas because the evil spirit was gone. She could not tell fortunes anymore. The way the girl's owners made money was gone too! They blamed Paul and Silas. The owners dragged Paul and Silas into the marketplace.

The marketplace was a place where people bought and sold things. The marketplace was the center of public life. There was no city hall like we have today. Everyone was able to see everything that happened there. They did not miss any important thing.

The slave girl was like the people that are victims of human trafficking today. Evil people trick and kidnap women and children. They take them away and sell them as sex-slaves.

Some armies in other countries force young boys to fight. Some of the boys are only nine or ten years old.

The last few years we read about approximately three hundred young girls that were kidnapped from a **Christian** school in Nigeria, East Africa. The average age of the girls was thirteen-years old. They were used as wives of soldiers and to carry explosives in attacks called "suicide missions."

In America and other modern countries, women and girls are captured and sold to be sex slaves. They are forced to be prostitutes. The people that capture and sell these boys, girls, and women make a lot of money.

Human trafficking is a crime, but most of the evil people are never caught. Some churches have programs that help people who escape from the people that captured them. The churches give counselling. The churches help them start a new life. They offer a place to stay, and training in a field that will help them support themselves.

There are still thousands of captured people who need help. Believers must try to do something to stop these illegal activities. The activities must be stopped before the lives of more people are destroyed.

What can we do?

- 1. We can speak out and try to get our government leaders to take stronger action against these things.
- 2. We can educate young children and teenagers about the dangers that can happen to them.
- 3. We must pray for the victims. We must pray that God will cause these things to stop.

What are some of the ways you think evil people trick children and teenagers to go with them?

What are some ways you or your church can help stop human trafficking?

There are businesses that do not value the lives of women and girls. What about movie and television programs that disrespect women? What about strip clubs where men go to look at women with no clothing? Why do these businesses exist? Their only purpose is to make money. They are making money by using human beings. They do not respect people.

Society must also decide to not allow those things that do not value human life. Believers must work to pass laws that would not allow those things to happen.

BIBLE SKILL: Compare Scriptures

An important method of Bible Study is to compare a Bible verse with other different Bible verses. Find verses in today's session to compare with the verses below. The words may not be exactly the same. Find out if they have the same meanings.

Other Verse	Today's Verse
1. Acts 4:12	
2. Philippians 2:9	
3. Psalm 8:4	

3. Valued by God (Psalm 139:13-16)

VERSE 13

¹³ You made my whole being; You formed me in my mother's body.

God has all power. He took a tiny bit of material and put everything in it to make a person. That piece of material is smaller than the period at the end of a sentence. That piece of material has the plan for the color of a person's eyes, hair, and skin. It has the plan for the size of the person.

It is clear the Bible says a person is a living being from the very minute of **conception**. *Conception* means "when the cells from the father come together with the mother's cells in her body." That is called conceiving or conception.

At that moment the cells come together and become a **fetus**. The fetus is the first part of human development. The fetus is a human person.

Some people believe **abortion** is OK. They say the fetus is not a baby until it is born. Other people say abortion is wrong if the doctor can hear the baby's heartbeat.

We know the baby is a human person when it is conceived. What does that mean to the believer? It means abortion at any time is wrong. It is killing a person. God does not want humans to be killed at any time in their lives.

VERSE 14

¹⁴I praise You because You made me in an amazing and wonderful way. What You have done is wonderful. I know this very well.

This psalm celebrates the wonderful way God created humans. The psalm celebrates the fact that God created everything about every person. He made human beings to have control of other living things on the earth.

VERSE 15

¹⁵ You saw my bones being formed as I took shape in my mother's body. When I was put together there,

In Psalm 8, David asked a question, "Why are people important to God?" The answer is in this verse. He made us. From the very beginning He was with us. He was with us even in our mother's body. He put us there.

Johnny made a little boat he could play with in a stream near his home. It was not a perfect boat. It was not very pretty. Johnny loved his boat. His father wanted him to have a nice boat to play with. He told Johnny he would buy him a nicer and bigger boat. Johnny said no. He loved his little boat because he made it himself.

We may not be beautiful, smart, or talented, but God loves us. God loves us because He made us Himself.

Why was it important for David to remember all people that God

created?		

How does this truth help us t	face life today?	

VERSE 16

¹⁶You saw my body as it was formed. All the days planned for me were written in Your book before I was one day old.

David says God has a book. God writes the plans He has for us in His book. He writes those plans with love. He knows our secret thoughts. He continues to care for us.

In Psalm 8, David also asked why God takes care of human beings. The answer is in this verse. God had plans for humans before they were born. He made them a little lower than the angels. He crowned humans with glory and honor.

God put humans in charge of everything He made. Humans are God's most precious creation.

God created humans. He cares for us. He honors us by making us just a little lower than the angels. He gives man control of the things He made.

God proves all human life is valuable. Why should people think human life is valuable? God made people and He values them. We must value human life also.

KEY DOCTRINE: The Christian and the Social Order

We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death.

criticized yourself? Yes No
Write the words from Psalm 139 that can change your thoughts about yourself.
Use these words in a prayer of thanksgiving to God for His love and plan for your life.

IN MY CONTEXT

Throughout God's Word we see how much God values each person. He loves each person so much that He willingly died so that every person might have eternal life. Throughout history and today, we see how sin in the world has caused people to value money or personal success more than human life.

Believers must answer some very difficult questions today. One question is, "Why does every person have worth and value at the time of conception?" What do you think?

Do you think Christians have a responsibility to protect all human life? Why do you think that?

What are some things Christians can do to show they value all human life?

The final question believers must answer is, "Does God expect Christians to help protect people they do not know?" Yes or No

What does He expect Christians to do to help protect all human life?

If you feel God wants you to do something special to help protect all human life, pray right now He will show you what to do.

MEMORY VERSE

I praise You because you made me in an amazing and wonderful way.

What You have done is wonderful. I know this very well

-Psalm 139:14

ALL ARE IMPORTANT

ACTS 16:16-19; PSALM 139:13-16

PLAN AHEAD

- Pray for group members. Pray they will understand how God values all people.
- Resources: Find organizations in your city and state that help pregnant
 women and children. Make a list you can share with members of the
 group. Check out http://www.erlc.com for information and articles related
 to protecting life.
- Story: In the session two weeks ago one member signed the story from Acts 16:16-19. Ask this person to be prepared and sign the story again for the meeting.

FOCUS ATTENTION

Each January thousands of people participate in pro-life rallies across the country. In addition, many Christians honor **Sanctity** of Human Life Sunday on the third Sunday in January. These events help us remember that God values all human life, from beginning to end. It is also a time for us to share this news with others.

Abortion is not the only threat to life today. Use the information from *First Thoughts* to explain other things that threaten and disrespect human life (euthanasia, assisted suicide, and human trafficking). **Ask:** What are some other actions that show disrespect for human life? (Bullying, racism, etc.) Discuss.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Freedom Gained (Acts 16:16-18)

Two weeks ago we learned about a servant girl that made money for her owners. She had a demon in her that spoke through her. Paul and Silas were put in jail because of what happened in this story.

Today we will look at this story again. Encourage members to think about how the girl felt as they watch the story. Think about what her life was like as a slave. Ask the volunteer to sign the story of the servant girl and Paul.

Ask: Why do you think the girl's shouting bothered Paul so much? Discuss possible reasons. Be sure to include he may have felt sorry for her. She likely suffered because of the demon in her. She did not have control of her words. She also may have suffered because of her masters. Perhaps they beat her if she did not obey them.

2. The Complaint (Acts 16:19)

Ask the group to read verse 19. Bring attention to the phrase "now they could not use her to make money." Doesn't it seem people would be happy for the girl? She did not have a demon in her anymore. But her owners were angry. They did not care about the girl or what she wanted. They only wanted her because she could make money for them. **Ask:** What does it mean to use a person? Ask members to give examples they have seen.

3. Valued by God (Psalm 139:13-16)

Ask: When do you think life begins? Discuss. Some people, especially those who support abortion, believe life starts when a baby takes his first breath.

Sign Psalm 139:13-16. Ask a member to sign Jeremiah 1:5. Use the information from this section of the study guide to discuss the idea of **conception**. **Ask:** God knew us before we were born. What does it mean for us?

God loves all people. **Ask:** How does God show His love for all people? How can we show God's love to others?

IN MY CONTEXT

Lead members to share their answers from *In My Context*. Encourage members to make a plan to help people they know with spiritual and physical needs. Share the list of organizations with the group. Ask if they know of other organizations that help people. Pray for organizations that help people with food and shelter. Discuss possibilities of ways the group can help these organizations.

Close with prayer. Ask God for wisdom to know how we can show respect for life. Ask Him to give us His heart for others.