

Value All Human Life

Background

Study Verses:

Genesis 1:26-31; Exodus
1:8-22; Psalm 139:13-16;
Mark 10:13-16

Lesson Material:

Genesis 1:26-27; Exodus
1:15-17; Psalm 139:13-
16; Mark 10:13-16

Bible Truth

God created human life in His image. We must value life and protect it as a sacred gift from Him.



Rita was a teenage girl. She was not married. She learned she was pregnant. She was afraid to tell her parents. A Christian friend told her about a center in her town to help her. The counselors at the pregnancy care center gave her some helpful information about her pregnancy. They helped her talk with her parents. They helped her and her parents make plans to deal with the pregnancy and with the new baby. The young girl said she did not feel alone because of help from the center. There are centers like this all over America. They help with information, spiritual encouragement, and medical counseling. They offer biblical alternatives to abortion. Churches can show they value all human life by helping girls like Rita face their situation with faith and encouragement. Church members can show they value the life of both the mother and the unborn child.

What These Verses Tell Us

1. **Affirm Life's Value (Genesis 1:26-27)** – God created man and woman in His image so they can know and serve Him on earth.
2. **Respect and Protect Life (Exodus 1:15-17)** – Two Hebrew women obeyed God instead of the king and refused to kill newborn baby boys.
3. **Celebrate Life's Purpose (Psalm 139:13-16)** – David praised God for the wonder of His creation and purpose for David's life.
4. **Follow Jesus' Example (Mark 10:13-16)** – Jesus showed how He loved and valued children.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to be in "God's image?"
2. What did the Egyptian king want the nurses to do?
3. What did the nurses do?
4. What did the disciples tell the children to do?
5. What did Jesus do for the children?

Today's Lesson

Today's lesson is not from the book of Amos. It is a special lesson. In many churches today, special emphasis is made about the value of human life. We live in a time when it seems many people do not place a high value on human life. People seem unconcerned about issues such as abortion, problems of elderly people, poverty, and other situations giving the idea a person's life is of no value.

The first verses emphasize the value of human life as a gift from God. The other three sections look at how we can show we truly do value the lives of people. As you study these verses, let God speak to your heart about what you can do to support efforts in your church and community to reach out to those who are considering abortion, victims of child abuse and other violence, and others whose lives may be in danger.

1. Affirm Life's Value (Genesis 1:26-27)

The word *affirm* means “to show support or to defend.”

Verses 26-27. After the rest of the creation, God created man and woman. This creation is different from all the others because God created people in His image. In verse 31, we find these words, “God looked at everything He had made, and it was very good.” Everything God made was good, including people.

Today's lesson is not about “where did man come from?” The answer is clear in these verses. God made man!

These verses also tell us how God gave people the responsibility to rule over all the other creation. This means God saw people as more important than anything else He made.

God wants us to use things, love people, and honor Him. Too often, today, we read about someone loving things, using people, and ignoring God. This is not God's plan.

Because human life was made in God's image, we must value all people as sacred or holy. This includes life from the moment of conception through all of life, until a natural death.

EVERYTHING GOD MADE
WAS GOOD,
INCLUDING PEOPLE.

Because we have the responsibility to rule over God's creation, we must see the beauty of that creation, and especially the beauty of human life itself.

2. Respect and Protect Life (Exodus 1:15-17)

The Book of Exodus begins at the time when Jacob's family moved to Egypt where Joseph had much responsibility in the Egyptian kingdom. After many years Joseph died, but the family of Joseph continued to grow larger and larger with each generation. Then a new king began to rule in Egypt. He did not know about Joseph and the special plans for Jacob's descendants. He became afraid the Israelites would turn against him, and he could not control them.

Verses 15-16. This new king had a plan to keep the Israelite nation from growing. He would have the midwives (nurses who helped when a baby was born) to kill all the baby boys born to the Israelites. The king said they could let the baby girls live, but they must kill all the boys. The nurses were Israelites (Hebrews), not Egyptians.

Verse 17. Bible teachers believe Jacob's descendants had grown to more than 600,000 people by this time. This would require many more than just two midwives. We have in this verse a report of only two, but perhaps the others acted in the same way. Some Bible teachers think these two may have been the leaders, and so the others would do the same as these two. We do know from this story that these nurses refused to obey the king's order. They knew it was not right to kill a baby. The Bible explains how these nurses feared God. The word *fear* in this sentence means "to respect and honor." They obeyed God rather than obeying the king.

In the next verses, we learn the nurses told the king the Hebrew women had their babies too fast. The nurses could not get there in time. God blessed these nurses because they were faithful to him. Read the rest of this story in verses 16-22.

What does this story tell us? It reminds us how, from the beginning, God said human life is important to Him. Because God has a special love for people, they are holy to Him. This means He set people apart from all the rest of creation. He gave people a special place of honor.

**"YOU KNIT ME TOGETHER
IN MY MOTHER'S WOMB."**

We must be ready to show our devotion to God and our commitment to His view of the value of life. We must seek ways to

respect and protect people who are especially weak and need our support and encouragement. We are also to vote for persons who respect life and oppose laws when they do not respect life.

3. Celebrate Life's Purpose (Psalm 139:13-16)

Read the first 12 verses in this psalm. It is almost like a hymn of praise. This psalm begins with the words, "Lord, you have examined me and know all about me."

These verses prepare us for David's praise to God about how God has a purpose for every life, even before that person is born.

Verse 13. This verse reminds us how life begins while the baby is still inside the mother's body. Today, we understand much more about how a baby is formed and grows inside the mother. David's knowledge was much more limited. Yet, David knew how God put the baby together inside the mother. One translation has the words,

“You knit me together in my mother’s womb.” This is a more exact translation of the Hebrew words. David knew how a woman could knit a piece of string until it fit together to make a sweater. He used that “picture word” to express how he understood God put together all the cells into a human body.

No matter how much, or how little, we understand about conception and the growth of the baby inside the mother, we must recognize God’s hand in forming each person.

Verse 14. With that knowledge, we must praise God. David used the words *amazing* and *wonderful* to describe this.

Verses 15-16. David said God saw his bones being formed. But David also said God has a plan for that baby even while it is being formed inside the mother. God has a plan for all the days that person will live. All those plans were made before David was one day old!

Do you understand how God has a plan for your life? He made that plan before you were born. He has a plan for every life. That is why we must celebrate life and the purpose for each life. We must place the highest value on human life—our own life and the life of everyone.

JESUS GAVE US A GREAT
EXAMPLE ABOUT HOW TO
VALUE HUMAN LIFE

4. Follow Jesus’ Example (Mark 10:13-16)

These verses are in the middle of some of the teachings of Jesus recorded by Mark. It shows us the difference between how Jesus saw children and how His disciples saw them. Perhaps sometimes, we are guilty of seeing a child like the disciples saw them.

Verse 13. Can you see this situation as it developed? Jesus went into a house after teaching. His disciples asked Him some questions about what He had said. While they were talking, some people brought some children to Jesus. They wanted Jesus to touch them or bless them. The disciples were busy with their own questions. They didn’t want anyone to bother them. They didn’t want these people bothering Jesus when He was teaching. We can understand that because that is exactly how we might have acted! It becomes a matter of what we think is most important.

Verses 14-15. Jesus scolded His disciples. Jesus said something to them, and it is difficult for us to understand. Did Jesus mean only

children can go to heaven? Of course not. He explained that in verse 15. What He meant was people must come to Him and trust Him just like little children trusted Him. Other child-like characteristics of those who come to Jesus are humility (not proud), and innocence (turning from sin). The one who comes to Christ must have that kind of attitude and seek the salvation Christ wants to give.

Verse 16. Jesus took the children into His arms and blessed them. Jesus loved the little children. Can you imagine one of those children, several years later when he had become a man, remembering that day when he was in the arms of Jesus?

From this, we learn how we must always love, protect, and take care of little children. We must do the same for people who are weak, alone, and need someone to help them. Perhaps one day in the future, that child or that weak person, may remember our love and kindness and give thanks again to God for someone who cared for him.

A beautiful picture of this kind of love happened one day when a missionary was on the way to church. He reached down to pick up a small child playing in the mud and hugged that child and smiled at him. We see this when a man reaches out to take the hand of another man in a homeless shelter.

Jesus gave us a great example about how to value human life. We must treat all people with the same love and care Jesus showed to those children. Because we value their life, we must not get so busy with our own plans we cannot take time to help others.

What About You?

Do you know some people who need your special love and care? Look around you.

Think of Deaf people in your community who need special help. Perhaps they are not as able to handle the problems of life as you are. Show them the caring love Jesus wants you to show.

Look around you. Ask the Lord to show you people who need your love and care.

Applying the Lesson

Make a list of some of the special people who need your help. Think of ways you can help them. It may be financial help, but more often the little things we do from our kindness make the difference for them.

Read the list of ways you can help. Check the activities that you could do that will help others and show that you think life is important:

____ Donate clothes or food to your church or community "clothing closet" or "food pantry."

____ Volunteer at your church or community "clothing closet" or "food pantry."

____ Volunteer to answer the crisis phone for the pregnancy center.

____ Plan a party or special event for your local children's home.

A verse to remember: "So God created human beings in His image. In the image of God He created them" (Gen. 1:27).

Value All Human Life

Background Study Outline

1. **Crown of Creation**
(Gen. 1:26-31)
2. **Opposing Views;
Different Actions**
(Ex. 1:8-22)
3. **Praise to God for Life
and Purpose**
(Ps. 139:13-16)
4. **Blessing of the Chil-
dren** (Mark 10:13-16)

Lesson Material

1. **Affirm Life's Value**
(Gen. 1:26-27)
2. **Respect and Protect**
(Ex. 1:15-17)
3. **Celebrate Life's Pur-
pose** (Ps. 139:13-16)
4. **Follow Jesus' Exam-
ple** (Mark 10:13-16)

Bible Truth

God created human life in His image. We must value life and protect it as a sacred gift from Him.

The Bible in Context (Gen. 1:26-27)

Some concepts in the Bible are difficult to understand, but God wants us to understand. These verses are about the image of God. Paul used the words *fullness of God* or *fullness of Christ*, meaning “to become more and more like Christ” (Eph. 3:19; Col. 2:9-10). Jesus said we must become perfect as God is perfect (Matt. 5:48). Paul also wrote about being changed to the image of the Son of God (Rom. 8:29). God’s image is our goal as we grow spiritually.

Explore . . . Kingdom of God (Mark 10:14-15)

The kingdom of God is the central theme of the teaching of Jesus. Immediately after His baptism, Jesus went into Galilee, preaching the Good News from God. The message of Jesus was that the kingdom of God is near (Mark 1:14-15). Jesus used many parables to explain the kingdom. In Matthew 13 Jesus compared the kingdom with a farmer (v. 24), a seed (v. 31), yeast (v. 33), a treasure (v. 44), a pearl merchant (vv. 45-46), and a net (vv. 47-48). The kingdom of God means making Jesus Lord of our life.

STEP ONE – OVERVIEW

- The title and theme of today's lesson is "Value All Human Life." Note this is a special lesson on the "Sanctity of Human Life."
- **Make the lesson come alive!** Bring a large mirror to class. Place it so class members can see themselves as they come into the classroom. Place a sign at the top, "Are you living in the image of God? Do you know everyone is made in the image of God?"

STEP TWO – AFFIRM LIFE'S VALUE (GEN. 1:26-27)

- Ask someone to sign Genesis 1:26-27. This is a part of the story of creation.
- Ask someone ahead of time to discuss the image of God from "The Bible in Context," above, and other resources from the church library. Call attention to the mirror as you start this lesson. These verses tell us we are in the image of God!
- Ask someone to sign verse 27 again. This is a good memory verse.

STEP THREE – RESPECT AND PROTECT (EX. 1:15-17)

- Ask someone to sign verses 15-17. Review the discussion of these verses from the pupil material.
- Emphasize the need to respect and protect human life.

STEP FOUR – CELEBRATE LIFE'S PURPOSE (PS. 139:13-16)

- Ask someone to sign verses 13-16. Call attention to the emphasis that God has a plan for each one, from before we are born.
- Encourage discussion of how we can know God's purpose in our life.

STEP FIVE - FOLLOW JESUS' EXAMPLE (MARK 10:13-16)

- Ask someone to sign verses 13-16. Discuss how natural it was for the disciples to try to protect Jesus' time and strength, but they did not have respect for the spiritual needs of the children.
- Ask someone ahead of time to review the discussion of the kingdom of God from "Explore..." above, and other resources.

STEP SIX - CONCLUSION

- Close with prayer that class members will become more aware of opportunities to value all human life.