

"The Sanctity of Life"

Life is the gift of God; and because God gives it, life is precious! Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're going to explore the sanctity of life!

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. James 1:17 says that God is the giver of every good thing and every perfect thing. And I'm grateful for the written word that teaches us all about God, and all He has done for us. His word teaches us, protects us from evil, and guides us to eternal life. What a blessing! Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

In 1970 a Texas woman became pregnant and decided to fight the antiabortion legislation of her state. Using the pseudonym Jane Roe, she took Henry Wade, the Dallas district attorney, to court. The case eventually went to the Supreme Court in January, 1973, and is now the renowned Roe vs. Wade case. The Supreme Court ruled 7 to 2 that the Texas law banning abortion was unconstitutional. Its judgment inhibited all regulation of abortion during the first three months of pregnancy, and during the second and third trimesters regulated it only in relation to the mother's physical or mental health. Now this ruling permitted abortion on demand at every stage of pregnancy. In 2017, 862,300 babies were aborted. That's 2,362 per day, 98 per hour, and two since this program started.

Now dealing with an unwanted pregnancy is indeed complex and emotional. It has physical, social, medical, psychological, and spiritual considerations. Sadly, many have chosen to end the pregnancy by removing the life within. They appeal to national law and to changes in culture, but we know that there is a higher law and a greater power to which we must all give an account. So, we ask, "What principles can we find in the Bible? What does God say about life in the womb?"

If you want to study more about the sanctity of life, we offer this study free. If you want a printed copy of our study and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org, or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Psalm 139:13 to 16, and explore what God says about life in the womb.

Our reading today comes from Psalm 139, verses 13 to 16, and in this David speaks of his close relationship with God, even in the womb. "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." David recognized that God knew him and was making him even in the womb.

Let's pray together. "Heavenly Father we're grateful for Your Which helps us to understand Your will for our lives, the things that You can see that we cannot see, and how You understand us and know us from our very beginning of life. Father bless us and help us always to love You and do your will. In Jesus name we pray."

In the beginning, God made created male and female in His own image and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. God said in Genesis 1:26 to 27, "'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' So God created man in his own image, in the image

of God he created him; male and female he created them." We should note that of all His creatures God regarded only humans as made in His own image.

For this reason, God said in Genesis 9 and verse 6, that "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man." God has a very high view of life and forbids the taking of human life because of our relationship to God. Psalm 8 reminds us that God is "mindful of man." And every person, male or female, young or old, handicapped or whole, mentally challenged or not, diseased or not, has a valued life. In fact, Acts 17:28 says, that "we are His (speaking of God) offspring." Luke 3:38 calls Adam the "son of God." Hebrews 12 verse 9 helps us to understand our relationship with God. It says, "Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?" Yes, God is our heavenly Father and He made the spirits that dwell within us.

The Scriptures also record how God loves and cares for little children. Abortion proponents argue that the taking of a preborn child's life is not wrong since the unborn do not measure up to the definition of a viable person. A person to them is "one who has good mental and physical health and the ability to socialize." In their minds a fetus would not measure up. The Scriptures, however, view infants and children as a blessing from God. Psalm 127:3 says, "Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward." And God provided laws to protect unborn children. In Exodus 21:22 to 25 God penalizes those who would cause a miscarriage. The life of the unborn would call for the life of the one who caused the miscarriage.

The Hebrew word used in the Old Testament to refer to the unborn in Exodus is yeled, a word that "generally indicates young children, but may refer to teens or even young adults." The Hebrews did not have or need a separate word for unborn children. They were just like any other children, only younger. The Bible refers to born children and unborn children, but there is no such thing as a potential, incipient, or "almost" child.

Jesus also loved children and blessed them. Luke 18:15 to 16 says, "And they were bringing even their babies to Him so that He would touch them, but when the disciples saw it, they began rebuking them. But Jesus called for them, saying, 'Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.'" Now Jesus spoke of these little ones as persons belonging to the kingdom of God. The Greek New Testament uses the word "brephos" to describe these little children. It is significant that the New Testament uses the same word to describe an unborn child as it uses to describe a little child, that's the word "brephos." The Bible used this word to speak of John the Baptist who leaped in his mother's womb in Luke 1:41 and also verse 44. This word "brephos" is also used to speak of Jesus as a newborn baby in Luke 2 verses 12 and 16. We speak of a woman having a baby before birth and as a baby, we speak of that child as a baby after birth. The Scriptures use the same words in both the Old Testament and the New to describe the unborn and a baby that has been born.

The Scriptures also speak of God's role in what takes place in the womb. In Psalm 22 verses 9 to 10 David says, "Yet You are He who brought me forth from the womb; You made me trust when upon my mother's breasts. Upon You I was cast from birth (I was cast from birth); And You have been my God from my mother's womb." Samson told Delilah in Judges 16 to 17, "A razor has never come on my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaved, then my strength will leave me and I will become weak and become like any other man." God said to Jeremiah in Jeremiah 1 verse 5, "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." Paul proclaimed in Galatians 1 verse 15 that God "set

me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace." Yes, the Father of spirits takes life in the womb seriously and so should we.

David described God's work in the womb in Psalm 139:13 to 16: "For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be." We should never think God somehow doesn't know what the unborn are or what they are to become.

To take a life is to rob a person of his existence on earth; abortion ends the life that already exists and robs the life that is to be. When people decide for others who lives and who dies, they presume the place of God. Women must make most abortion decisions this day and time, and of course their making a very difficult decision during a difficult time, but no one knows what the future will hold. Who knows what the child will become? And we must not presume that we know. The Scriptures speak of some ill-timed pregnancies. Both Sarah and Elizabeth were too old to have children without God's help. If they had not given birth to these children, where would Isaac and John the Baptist be? If Jesse and his wife had thought seven sons were enough, there would have been no David. If Deborah or Esther's parents had wanted boys and aborted them because they were girls, where would Israel be?

There have been more than 60 million abortions since 1973! Were all those aborted babies unworthy of life? Were there no scholars, no musicians, no scientists, no authors, no preachers, no leaders, and no doctors among them? Where would you be if your parents had some reason to abort you?

Abortion interferes with God's work in the making of a person. A fetus in a woman's body is not mere tissue or only the product of conception. Nobody mourns the loss of tonsils, or an appendix, or a gall bladder. We may not like either the pain or the bills, but we do not need comfort from grief. But when a woman has a miscarriage, we mourn for her loss and the unborn child. More than one in my own family has lost a child due to a miscarriage or to death shortly after birth. If this loss isn't a person, why would we mourn?

By the time a mother knows she's pregnant, an unborn baby has its own circulatory and nervous systems. Blood cells, kidney cells, and nerve cells are developing. By eight weeks, eyes and ears begin to form. Arms and legs start to grow. The heart is beating, and blood regularly streams through the main vessels. The brain continues to grow, and the lungs start to form. The baby is not some useless organ; this is the beginning of a unique person.

Sometimes I hear mothers say, well "It's my body, and I can do what I want with it." Technically speaking, the tissue of a fetus differs from the mother's tissue, even though it is in her body. Genetically speaking, the baby and mother are clearly not identical in their DNA. Consider also that a mother is always female. She is certainly different both biologically and genetically should the baby be a male. Milk is the product only of a mother, but a fetus is the product of both the mother and the father. A product of his body resides in her body, and that creates the person. And that's why we have paternity lawsuits. The new baby is the result of the union of two people. Women do not produce babies alone.

When someone won't admit abortion is wrong, she may say, "Well you can't legislate morality." I like how Martin Luther King responded to this charge against legislating morals. He said, "We hear the familiar cry that morals can't be legislated. This may be true, but behavior can be regulated. The law may not be able to make a man love me, but it can keep him from lynching me." Remember: man's legislation doesn't change God's morals.

Many women think aborting a baby will be the answer to their problems, only to realize the abortion opens up a whole new stack of issues and problems. Having an abortion can burden a person for life. One lady wrote in 1994: "That women undergoing abortion have no idea what suffering they will encounter after the abortion, and daily for the rest of their lives, when it suddenly dawns on them that they chose to extinguish a precious life. Twenty-three years ago (she said), as a frightened young girl, alone, seeing no way out, I opted for a legal abortion that left me infertile to suffer an eternal hell on earth, constantly aching for a child of my own to nurture. And taking the life of an unborn child eats away at your soul continually, like a ravenous cancer, causing one to pray for a quick demise. You will always wonder if the fetus was male or female, what he or she would look like. Yearly, you will mournfully recall the day that your baby was taken from your body. If only someone had mentioned adoption to me as a viable alternative to a temporary condition, my child would be alive today, perhaps making a difference in someone's life."

According to a study published in 2011 by Britain's Royal College of Psychiatrists, women who have abortions are 81 percent more likely to experience subsequent mental health problems. The greatest increases were seen in relation to suicidal behaviors and substance abuse. Their results came from 22 studies of nearly 900,000 women from six countries over a twelve year period. They found that women who delivered an unplanned pregnancy were significantly less likely to have mental health problems than similar women who aborted unplanned pregnancies. Women with a history of abortion were 55 percent more likely to have mental health problems than women who did not abort an unplanned pregnancy.

God desires that every unmarried man and woman remain sexually pure. A sexually pure person doesn't have to face the challenge of an unwanted pregnancy. And if you find yourself with an unwanted pregnancy, my heart goes out to you. I pray that you'll not choose an abortion as a way out. As a parent of four and the grandparent of twelve, I know the sacrifices and challenges of bringing children into this world. If you're unable or unwilling to rear a child, others will gladly adopt that child and can provide what's needed. Choose life, give your child an opportunity to learn about God's love, and allow some Christian family to make a home for your child. You'll never regret doing the right thing.

Let us pray. "Father we are mind-full of all the goodness that You have given to us in our lives. Help us to recognize the sanctity of life, and to do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen."

As a minister, I've known women who gave in to the temptation to abort their child as a quick solution to a difficult circumstance. Once they realized what they did, some think they cannot find forgiveness. Listen to me. Yes, what you did was wrong. And you can't change things, but there's still hope. Christ sacrificed His life on the cross for you to give us hope. His blood is powerful enough to cleanse the worst sins. If Jesus could forgive that blaspheming, violent, and murderous persecutor of the church, Saul of Tarsus, He can forgive you.

Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 1:15 to 16, "It's a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life." God's grace is greater than our sins. And His blood can wash us clean! We can't change the past, but God can forgive us and no longer hold us accountable for our sins.

Put your trust in Christ Jesus! Repent and turn away from that old sin and focus on serving the Lord. When we humble ourselves and come lovingly and penitently to the Lord, confessing Jesus Christ as

the Son of God and are baptized, God washes away our sins, and in baptism it takes place with the blood of Jesus. Ananias told Saul of Tarsus in Acts 22:16, "Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name." By being born of water and the spirit, you can be born again! The old person of sin will have died; it was crucified with Christ and you are free from sin. That takes place in baptism (Romans 6:3 to 7). God can forgive you.

We hope today's study about the sanctity of life has stirred you to consider the Lord's way. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area at www.searchtv.org. You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." And be sure to like the programs that you watch; this helps us spread the program. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God.

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