

"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." And 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 given. I'm grateful for the written word that teaches us about all that God has done for us. His word teaches us, protects us from evil, and guides us to eternal life. Oh 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 known as Roe vs. Wade. 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 it regulated it only in relation to the mother's physical or mental health. Well this ruling implicitly permitted abortion on demand at every stage of pregnancy. In 2014, the latest year for these statistics, 954,000 babies were aborted. That's 2,614 per day, 109 per hour, and three since I began speaking.

So dealing with an unwanted pregnancy is tough, it's indeed complex, it's emotional. It has physical, social, medical, psychological, and spiritual considerations. And 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 there is a higher law and a greater power to which we must all give an account. And so, we ask, "What principles can we find in the Bible? And what does God say about life in the womb?"

Perhaps you want to study more about the sanctity of life, and so we offer this study free. If you'd like a printed copy or a CD of our study and you 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 at our website at www.searchtv.org.

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

Our reading today is from a Psalm of David, Psalm 139, verses 13 to 16. "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." That's a great statement of God's relationship to us when we were beginning life itself. Let's pray. Father we're so thankful that from the very beginning of our existence You have formed us and made us and wove us together. And Father help us to love You and to serve You always. May Your will be done on earth As it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen!

In the beginning God made man 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, and in the image of God

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

For this reason God said in Genesis chapter 9 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." 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 verse 28 says that "we are His offspring." Luke 3:38 calls Adam the "son of God." Hebrews 12 and 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.

The Scriptures also record how God loves and cares for little children. Now 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. Well a person to them is "one who has good mental and physical health and the ability to socialize." Well in their minds the fetus would not measure up. The Scriptures, however, view infants and children as a blessing from God. Psalm 127 and verse 3 says, "Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward." God provided laws to protect unborn children. In Exodus 21 verses 22 to 25 God penalizes those who would cause a miscarriage. The life of the unborn would call for the life of 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 a need to separate word for unborn children. They were just like any other children, only younger. In the Bible there are references to born children and unborn children, but there is no such thing as a potential, incipient, or "almost" child.

Jesus loved little children and blessed them. In Luke 18 verses 15 and 16 the Bible 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's significant that the New Testament uses the same word to describe an unborn child as it used to describe a little child, the word "brephos." Now this word is used to speak of John the Baptist who leaped in his mother's womb in Luke 1 verse 41 and also verse 44. This word "brephos" is used to speak of Jesus as a newborn baby in Luke 2 and verse 12, also in verse 16. We speak of a woman having a baby before birth and a baby after birth. The Scriptures use the same words in both the Old Testament and the New Testament to describe the unborn and a baby who has been born.

The Scriptures also speak of God's role in what takes place in the womb, in Psalm 22 verses 9 and 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; You have been my God from my mother's womb." Samson told Delilah in Judges 16 verse 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 be 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 and verse 15 that God "set me apart

even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace." The Father of spirits has taken life in the womb seriously and so should we.

David described God's work in the womb in Psalm 139 verses 13 to 16, as we read a moment ago: he said, "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 that were ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be." We should never think that 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 it's existence on earth; abortion ends the life that already is 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 make most abortion decisions during a very difficult time in their lives, but no one knows what the future will hold. Who knows what some child will become? We must not presume that we know. The Scriptures speak of some ill-timed pregnancies. For instance, both Sarah and Elizabeth were too old to have children without God's help. Why if they had not had 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 58 (million), 586 (thousand), 256 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 just tissue, 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 the pain or the bills from those surgeries, but we don't need comfort and we don't grieve over the loss of tonsils. But when a woman has a miscarriage, we mourn for her loss and we mourn for the unborn child. More than one in my own family has lost a child due to a miscarriage or to a death shortly after birth. Well if this loss isn't a person, why would we mourn?

By the time a mother knows that she's pregnant, an unborn baby has its own circulatory and nervous systems. Blood cells, kidney cells, and nerve cells are developing already. By eight weeks, eyes and ears begin to form. Arms and legs are beginning to grow. The heart is beating, and the 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 with it what I want to." Well technically speaking, the tissue of a fetus differs from the mother's tissue, even though it's in her body. Genetically speaking, the baby and the 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 of a mother, but a fetus is the product of both the mother and of the father; a product of his body resides in her body that creates the person. That's why we have paternity lawsuits. The new baby is the result of the union of two people. And so women do not produce babies alone.

When someone won't admit that abortion is wrong, she may say, "Well you can't legislate morality." Well I like how Martin Luther King responded to this charge against legislating morals. He

said, "Well we hear the familiar cry that morals can't be legislated. Well this may be true (he said), 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." Folks we need to remember: that man's legislation does not change God's morals.

Many women think aborting a baby will be the answer to their problems only to realize that 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, and 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. 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 your baby was taken from your body. Oh if only one 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. Oh women with a history of abortion were 55 percent more likely to have mental health problems than women who gave birth.

God desires that every unmarried young man and young woman remain sexually pure. A sexually pure person doesn't have to face the challenge of an unwanted pregnancy. 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 the 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. Oh choose life, give your child an opportunity to learn about God and to love, and allow some Christian family to make a home for your child. You'll never regret doing the right thing. Let's pray together. Father help us to love You, and help us to love each child. And Father may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen!

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

Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 1 verses 15 to 16, that "It's a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, (and he said) among whom I am foremost of all. And yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life." Oh God's grace is greater than our sins. 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.

So put your trust in Christ! Repent and turn away from that old sin and focus on serving the Lord. And when we humble ourselves and we come lovingly and penitently to the Lord, confessing Jesus Christ as the Son of God and we're baptized, God washes away our sins in baptism 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. And that takes place in baptism (Romans chapter 6 verses 3 to 7). Oh God can forgive you.

Well we hope that 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 or a CD 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 you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at www.searchtv.org. You can also watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, if you contact us, we're not here to get your money. We're here to help you get to heaven.

Please get involved with a church of Christ. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.