

Value All  
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Acts 16:16-19; Psalm 139:13-16

Today is our annual observance of Sanctity of Human Life Sunday. **What does the word “sanctity” mean?** We obviously think of abortion when we observe this weekend, and rightly so. **What are some other examples of sinful people treating human life as less than sacred?**

Big Idea: Christ values every person, so we should not exploit or disregard others. We’re looking at two passages of scripture that speak to this idea.

You may recall a couple of weeks ago an incident in Acts 16 that led to Paul and Silas being put in prison, then miraculously delivered by God. Let’s see how that example illustrates the sin of exploitation of human life.

Acts 16:16–19 (ESV) Luke writes:

<sup>16</sup> As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. <sup>17</sup> She followed Paul and us, crying out, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.” <sup>18</sup> And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And it came out that very hour.

<sup>19</sup> But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers.

- **What value did the owners of this slave girl place on her life? What was she worth to them after God delivered her from demonic possession?**
- In the ancient world human life was “cheap.” In scripture and history there are many examples of babies being killed or sacrificed to idols. We would hope people would have advanced beyond such disregard for life, but we haven’t.

- **What “industry” of exploitation of human life has become a major focus in our country today? It’s not just about money. What is the real driving force behind that kind of exploitation?**
- As with every evil in our world, failure to recognize human life as sacred comes down to SIN. It’s the contrast between Satan and God.
- Satan hates human life. His mission is to destroy every life He can.
- God considers every life as sacred because He lovingly created each life, and sent His Son to die for every person making provision for eternal life for all who believe in Him.
- Let’s look at Psalm 139, a familiar Psalm written by David that beautifully captures how we should look at every life beginning with our own.
- David is speaking to our Heavenly Father and in the first twelve verses he addresses how God’s eyes are on each of us no matter where we are.
- **What emotions do you feel when you realize the eyes of a loving Heavenly Father are watching over you? How does being reminded of God’s ever-watchful eye change how we feel and how we live our lives?**
- **Verse six: How did David describe his own emotions about this?**
- In verse seven David shifts from God’s OMNISCIENCE to God’s OMNIPRESENCE. God isn’t just watching us; He’s WITH us wherever we go.
- Sadly, all too often we forget that God is with us every minute of every day.
- What a powerful reminder that He never leaves us!
- Verses 13-16 beautifully testify to the fact that God didn’t just begin watching over us when we came into this world. He CREATED us in His own image.

Psalm 139:13–16 (ESV)

<sup>13</sup> For you formed my inward parts;  
you knitted me together in my mother’s womb.

<sup>14</sup> I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.  
Wonderful are your works;

my soul knows it very well.

<sup>15</sup> My frame was not hidden from you,

when I was being made in secret,  
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.  
<sup>16</sup> Your eyes saw my unformed substance;  
in your book were written, every one of them,  
the days that were formed for me,  
when as yet there was none of them.

- David reminds us that God created each of us in amazing, intricate detail.
- Words like “formed,” “knitted,” and “woven” speak to the fact that every development of our human body and soul was carefully and miraculously orchestrated by a loving Father. No human life just happened, each one is carefully planned and beautifully made.
- Without the benefit of modern science and ultrasound technology, David was inspired by the Spirit of God to sing about every detail of human anatomy: inward parts, the skeleton (frame), even the embryonic stage of “unformed substance.” David understood what a miracle our bodies are.
- Look at verse 16. **Why is that verse a perfect response to those who disregard the unborn?**
- Verse 16 makes it completely clear that an embryo in its earliest stages, as “unformed substance” is a living soul. Look at the words: “...in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.”
- When deceived people talk about “blobs of tissue,” they’ve chosen to ignore the fact that God has written the story of every day of life for each soul He created in His image.
- How tragic to disregard that truth; what a “win” for Satan and for sin.
- In verse 14 David gives credit where credit is due by praising God for His “wonderful works” in creating each human life.
- How often do we pause to give God praise for the miraculous body He’s given us to live in? Thanking and praising God for how He has created us should be a daily priority. When we struggle with self image or self esteem, it’s a great time to pull out Psalm 139 and remind ourselves that God created us with loving precision. His mighty, creative works are so great we should be awestruck!

- **Discussion: How can you and I do our part? What are some ways we can put our belief in the sanctity of human life into practice?**

- Here are some ideas and resources from Southern Baptists and Focus on the Family on how we can each do our part:

<https://erlc.com/resource-library/erlc-podcast-episodes/by-tag/sanctity-of-life>

<https://www.focusonthefamily.com/pro-life/pre-born/speaking-up-to-defend-life/speaking-up-to-defend-life>

So, What's the Takeaway?

- Our loving Heavenly Father made every person in His image. Jesus values every person so much that He was willing to die for us. Because He values every life, we should too.
- We can start by thanking and praising Him daily for the gift of life He has given to each of us; how He created us and ordained every day of our lives before we were even conceived.
- We also need to value each and every life we come in contact with. That means seeing others through the eyes of Jesus. Even when we deal with people who are hard to love, we need to be reminded that He loves them.
- We need to be courageous in standing up for the sanctity of life. We may not give speeches or lead a demonstration, but we can support ministries and leaders who make a difference in this area.
- We also need to remember that the sanctity of life extends beyond the unborn to those who are being exploited (i.e. – sex trafficking,) marginalized and discriminated (i.e. - racism,) and ignored (i.e. – the elderly.) We need to do our part to support efforts to address the needs of those who are victims in these areas.
- Finally, we need to see every person through the lens of Psalm 139: fearfully and wonderfully made with every day of their lives ordained in advance by a loving Heavenly Father.