

347



***“WE DON’T DETERMINE WHICH HUMAN
LIVES HAVE VALUE. WE RECOGNIZE
THE VALUE THAT GOD HAS ALREADY
GIVEN THEM.”***

BEARING *THE* IMAGE OF GOD

Every human life has value—not because of what a person can do, contribute, achieve, or become, but because of whose image that person bears.

Before Scripture gives us commands about how we should treat one another, it tells us something extraordinary about who we are.

“Then God said, ‘Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us.’” — Genesis 1:26

Human dignity begins here. Men and women are uniquely created in the image of God. Our value is not assigned by government, determined by society, earned through accomplishment, or dependent upon our age, health, independence, intelligence, usefulness, or circumstances.

Human life has inherent worth because human beings bear the image of their Creator.

That truth forms the foundation of a biblical understanding of life.

CREATED *IN* HIS IMAGE

Genesis 1:26–27 establishes a distinction between humanity and the rest of creation: God made human beings in His own image.

Later, after sin entered the world, God again pointed to His image as the reason human life must be treated as sacred (Genesis 9:6). James makes the same connection when warning believers about how we speak about other people, describing human beings as those “made in the image of God” (James 3:9).

The image of God isn’t reserved for the strong, healthy, wanted, powerful, or independent. It belongs to humanity.

That means biblical human dignity cannot rise and fall according to circumstances. A person does not become more valuable when he becomes productive or less valuable when he becomes dependent. She does not gain dignity when others want her or lose dignity when caring for her becomes difficult.

Our value begins with God, not with us.

This radically changes the way Christians view human life.

KNOWN *AND* FORMED *BY* GOD

Scripture also speaks with remarkable intimacy about God's involvement in human life before birth. David writes: **"You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb."** — Psalm 139:13

He continues by praising God because he is "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14). The womb is not presented as a place hidden from God's attention. David describes God as actively knowing and forming him there.

The prophet Jeremiah records God's words: **"I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb."** — Jeremiah 1:5

And in Luke 1:39-44, Scripture describes the unborn John responding to the presence of the unborn Jesus when Mary visits Elizabeth. Together, these passages reveal something beautiful:

Human life in the womb is neither unseen nor insignificant to God.

The God who creates life knows it, sees it, and gives it purpose.

PROTECTING *THE* VULNERABLE

Because human beings bear God's image, Scripture repeatedly commands God's people to defend those who are vulnerable.

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those being crushed.” — Proverbs 31:8

Throughout Scripture, God demonstrates particular concern for those who can easily be overlooked, exploited, abandoned, or oppressed.

- ***The poor***
- ***The widow***
- ***The orphan***
- ***The foreigner***
- ***The sick***
- ***The powerless***

Jesus continued this pattern throughout His ministry. He welcomed children, touched lepers, honored women society dismissed, cared for the sick, and showed compassion toward those others preferred to ignore.

A biblical ethic of life therefore asks more than:
“Is this person alive?”

It also asks: **“How should I love and protect this person because he or she bears the image of God?”**

Protecting life and caring for people cannot be separated.

FROM CREATED BEGINNING TO NATURAL END

If human worth comes from bearing God's image rather than from ability or independence, then that worth remains throughout every stage of human life.

Before birth. In childhood. Through disability or illness. During seasons of dependence. Into old age. And as natural death approaches.

This is why Christians should reject measurements of human value based upon usefulness, convenience, strength, wantedness, or quality of life. Our responsibility is not merely to oppose the taking of innocent human life. We are also called to create a culture in which human beings are loved, protected, and cared for.

A biblical culture of life cherishes both the child and the mother, both the strong and the weak, both the independent and the dependent.

Every person bears God's image. Every person is our neighbor.

WHY *THIS* MATTERS TODAY

These truths become especially important when our culture wrestles with difficult questions involving human life.

Abortion. Physician-assisted suicide. Euthanasia. Disability. Medical ethics. Care for mothers and children. Treatment of the elderly. Protection of people who cannot advocate for themselves.

These issues can quickly become political arguments. For the Christian, however, the starting point must come before politics: **What is a human life, and who determines its value?**

If human dignity is determined by autonomy, usefulness, wantedness, health, or circumstance, then some lives will inevitably be valued more highly than others. But if human dignity comes from God, the question changes.

We don't determine which human lives have value. We recognize the value God has already given them.

That conviction should shape not only the way we vote, but the way we live. It should affect the laws we support, the ministries we serve, the women facing unexpected pregnancies whom we walk alongside, the children we welcome, the families experiencing disability whom we support, the elderly we honor, and the vulnerable whose voices we defend.

This is what it means to carry a biblical value of life beyond Sunday.

THINK BIBLICALLY: *LIFE*

When considering a cultural issue, proposed law, candidate, or public-policy debate involving human life, ask:

- **What does Scripture reveal about the people affected by this issue?**
- **Does this recognize the inherent dignity of every human being—or make human value dependent upon circumstances?**
- **Who is vulnerable or unable to advocate for themselves?**

- **Does this protect innocent human life?**
- **Does this encourage compassion and care for those facing difficult circumstances?**
- **Am I applying the same biblical standard of human dignity consistently—even when doing so is inconvenient?**

These questions move us beyond political talking points and back to the foundation:

What does God's Word say?

ENGAGE *FAITHFULLY*

Believing that life is sacred requires more than holding the right position.

Pray for wisdom, vulnerable people, families facing difficult circumstances, and those making decisions that affect human life.

Learn about legislation and policies involving life and human dignity.

Speak with truth and grace when human life is threatened or devalued.

Serve organizations and ministries caring for mothers, children, families, people with disabilities, the elderly, and others who are vulnerable.

Engage your elected officials when legislation affects the protection of human life.

Vote with an understanding of how candidates and policies will affect human dignity and the protection of vulnerable people.

And through all of it, remember that the people who disagree with us also bear the image of God.

Our conviction should be unwavering, and our compassion should be unmistakable.

BEYOND SUNDAY: *LIFE*

The value of life is not merely a political position to defend. It is a biblical truth to live.

When we welcome the child, support the mother, honor the elderly, defend the vulnerable, care for the suffering, speak for those without a voice, and advocate for laws that protect human dignity, we demonstrate something profound about the God we worship.

We believe every human life is worthy of protection because every human being bears the image of God.

***KNOW THE WORD. THINK BIBLICALLY.
ENGAGE FAITHFULLY.***