

## SESSION 7

# PROTECT HUMAN LIFE

For additional commentary, see the Leader Guide or Adult Commentary, available for purchase at [LifeWay.com/ExploreTheBible](http://LifeWay.com/ExploreTheBible).

## GENESIS 9:1-7

<sup>9:1</sup> God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be **fruitful and multiply**<sup>a</sup> and fill the earth. <sup>2</sup> The **fear and terror**<sup>b</sup> of you will be in every living creature on the earth, every bird of the sky, every creature that crawls on the ground, and all the fish of the sea. They are placed under your authority. <sup>3</sup> Every living creature will be food for you; as I gave the green plants, I have given you everything. <sup>4</sup> However, you must not eat meat with its lifeblood in it. <sup>5</sup> I will require the life of every animal and every man for your life and your blood. I will **require**<sup>c</sup> the life of each man’s brother for a man’s life. <sup>6</sup> Whoever sheds man’s blood, his blood will be shed by man, for God made man in His image. <sup>7</sup> But you, be fruitful and multiply; spread out over the earth and multiply on it.”

## PSALM 8:4-8

<sup>8:4</sup> what is man that You remember him, the son of man that You look after him? <sup>5</sup> You made him little less than God and **crowned**<sup>d</sup> him with glory and honor. <sup>6</sup> You made him lord over the works of Your hands; You put everything **under his feet**<sup>e</sup>. <sup>7</sup> all the sheep and oxen, as well as the animals in the wild, <sup>8</sup> the birds of the sky, and the fish of the sea that pass through the currents of the seas.

## PROVERBS 24:10-12

<sup>24:10</sup> If you do nothing in a difficult time, your strength is limited. <sup>11</sup> **Rescue**<sup>f</sup> those being taken off to death, and save those **stumbling toward**<sup>g</sup> **slaughter**. <sup>12</sup> If you say, “But we didn’t know about this,” won’t He who **weighs hearts**<sup>i</sup> consider it? Won’t He who **protects**<sup>j</sup> your life know? Won’t He repay a person according to his work?

## PHILIPPIANS 2:12-16a

<sup>2:12</sup> So then, my dear friends, just as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now even more in my absence, **work out**<sup>k</sup> your own

## EXPLORING KEY WORDS

**a** used in the same manner here as told to man and woman (Gen 1:22,28), living creatures (Gen. 8:17), Ishmael (Gen. 17:20), Jacob (Gen. 28:3; 35:11), and all Israel (Gen. 47:27)

**b** affirms humanity’s authority over creation

**c** to seek; the respect for life shows that it’s a gift of God and is to be treated with reverence

**d** used figuratively in reference to God’s blessings on humankind

**e** an expression describing authority of one over another; used in the New Testament to refer to the Lord’s authority (see 1 Cor. 15:25-27; Eph. 1:22, Heb. 2:8); used in the Old Testament to describe David’s defeat of his enemies (1 Kings 5:3)

**f** to be delivered from overwhelming people or forces

**g** describes those who are involuntarily or forcibly moved

**h** also used to describe the Jewish defeat of their enemies in the days of Esther (see Esth. 9:5)

**i** “pondereth the heart” (KJV); meaning to regulate, measure, or estimate

**j** a word meaning both to guard and to preserve

**k** to do that which results in accomplishments; as Christians, we are in between what God has begun and what He is yet to complete.

**l** a life that stands in contrast to the corruption around it; the word translated “pure” can also mean “harmless.” It’s the same word used in Jesus’ instructions that His disciples be “as harmless as doves” (Matt 10:16).

**m** literally “the word which gives life”

salvation with fear and trembling. <sup>13</sup> For it is God who is working in you, enabling you both to desire and to work out His good purpose.

<sup>14</sup> Do everything without grumbling and arguing, <sup>15</sup> so that you may be **blameless and pure**,<sup>1</sup> children of God who are faultless in a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine like stars in the world. <sup>16a</sup> Hold firmly to the **message of life**.<sup>m</sup>

## NOTES

## “ TALKING POINTS

### »» PART OF OUR PURPOSE (Gen. 9:1-7)

- Following the flood, God reminded Noah of humanity's responsibility to oversee creation, including the protection of life—especially human life.
- Be careful to explain that the value of humanity is based on our being created in the image of God (Gen. 1; 2).

### »» VALUED IN HIS CREATION (Ps. 8:4-8)

- The psalmist declared his amazement with God's created order, identifying humanity as the crowning point within that creation.
- The writer of Hebrews viewed Psalm 8 as being fulfilled in Jesus Christ, linking salvation and creation (see Heb. 2:9).

### »» CALLED TO ACTION (Prov. 24:10-12; Phil. 2:12-16a)

- God calls His followers to represent His interests to a fallen creation.
- Solomon and Paul reminded their readers that God holds everyone responsible for valuing and protecting human life within His creation.

### »» SUMMARY STATEMENTS

- Although we are sinners living in a fallen world, God still holds us accountable to value and protect all human life.
- God created humans in His image, bestowing on humanity the highest value.
- God's people are to act in accordance with God's concerns, being people who value all human life.



## FOCUS ATTENTION

### What does human individuality reveal about our Creator?

- Our uniqueness is important to us, but we must remain aware that we all share the most important quality as human beings—the image of God, placed there by our Creator.
- Being made in the image of God gives us family identity. We were created to be with Him as part of His family.

## EXPLORE THE TEXT GENESIS 9:1-7

### What commands and guidelines did God give Noah and his family in this passage?

- God has dramatically proven life is valuable and should be lived honorably by saving Noah's family and all the animals in a complete do-over for the human race. When God began to speak, He gave guidelines for foundational views He wants people to have. By stating the penalty for taking a human life, He reaffirmed the worth of even one person's life.

### How do the words of God in this passage delineate human life differently than animal life? In what terms did God describe the worth of a person's life?

- God clearly established the worth of a murder victim's life. If you take a life, there's nothing worth enough to pay for what you've done, other than your very life.

### What kind of relationship between man and the rest of creation was defined by God after the flood?

- As members of the body of Christ we have been given personal responsibility to love, care, and protect the lives of those God places in our path, both believers (see John 13:35) and unbelievers (see Luke 10:36-37).

## PSALM 8:4-8

### How is spending time observing the wonders of creation worthwhile to you?

- The perspective gained by watching the ocean horizon, or realizing the vastness of a starry sky is healthy, and checks our pride and self-focus.

### What in this passage ascribes unique value to people, in addition to being image bearers of God?

- Jesus' death on the cross validates the worth of all people.
- Man's role and position of authority over creation is God-given, not earned.
- Being entrusted with responsibility gives us a sense of worth.

### How is God's creation of mankind a testimony to His majesty and His loving kindness?

- If God, able to create in minute intricacy and expansive grandeur, chooses to value and relate to each person in their weakness, why would we ever think we don't need to do the same?

### How does God want His people to view those with physical disabilities, developmental delays, mental illness, the ill, the elderly and the unborn? What other passages would you look to for a correct view?

- Jesus treated women, children, the broken, and the diseased with dignity, considering them all to be worth His time and attention, even when no one else in society did. All are worthy of knowing Him.

### How can Christians value, protect, and show worth to the unborn and weak without alienating those who don't understand their own *Imago Dei*, or "image of God"?

- Usefulness, achievement, and convenience have become idols. Christians must speak and live truth about God-given dignity.
- When people begin to grasp their inherent worth, they see the fact that Jesus would die for them in a new light. They can begin to catch glimpses of their incredible value in God's sight.

## PROVERBS 24:10-13; PHILIPPIANS 2:12-16a

### What is our God-given responsibility to other believers? To others in general?

- To "do nothing" means to be truly lazy. How does this compare to being "lukewarm" in our devotion to Christ (Rev. 3:16)?

### What examples would you point to from Philippians 2:12-16 that demonstrate being other-oriented rather than self-oriented?

- The ultimate message of life is the gospel.
- Christians who held firmly to the message of life in the first century would have lived very differently than the Roman-influenced culture. The ripples of the gospel in someone's life cause awareness of the preciousness of every life.

### What role does pride have regarding hiding our weaknesses from others? In seeing other's weaknesses?

- Pride is one of the most pervasive and shape-shifting sins, as well as the root of many wrong attitudes. We cannot be prideful and truly love others simultaneously.

## SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE

### What has God asked you to change through this study?

- Understanding the eternal value of each life motivates us to kindness, generosity, protection, patience, and awareness of others. God-honoring interactions with people are the most important tasks of our week.
- **Personal Challenge:** Write an action or attitude change you have determined to make that will reflect the value of your own life or someone else's in a better way. How can you reach out to those you might have shunned or otherwise avoided before to now show them God's love?



# OBJECT LESSON

## AN ITEM YOU VALUE THAT HAS NO MONETARY WORTH

Display the object and explain its value. Ask the group if they have something that is not monetarily valuable, but is extremely valuable to them because of whose it is/was or what it represents to them.

Ask: *What does the item reveal about you? Your values? Your life history?*

(Another example could be a blank canvas, paints, and a paintbrush. Ask: *What could you do with the paints? If DaVinci used the brush, what would be the value—as opposed to an average person who painted an image?*)

Ask the group to describe in their own words what it means for something to have “value.”

Ask: *What makes a person valuable?*

Now imagine the person without any abilities or skills. What makes the person valuable?

What things do all human beings have in common that make them valuable?



## DIG DEEPER

### DO THE NEXT RIGHT THING

Charles Thomas Studd spent a distinguished missionary career serving in China, India, and Africa between 1885 and 1931. His motivation for such devoted service is evident in his most familiar quote: “Some wish to stay within the sound of church or chapel bell; I’d rather run a rescue shop within a yard of hell.”<sup>1</sup>

A congregation of believers ministering as God intends functions as a “rescue shop.” God’s people are called not only to stand in contrast to a lost world without Christ but also to stand in-between a lost world and death, rescuing as many as will receive the message of life held out to them.

Scripture challenges all Christians to affirm both the high value God places on human life and to embrace the responsibility to protect human life. This duty holds true for any human being, whether preborn, elderly, or any stage of life, forced against his or her will toward death (see Prov. 24:11).

So, how do you respond to the disregard for the sacredness of life? Too often the response is idle inaction.

The failing for many Christians regarding this duty is not a sin of commission but rather a sin of omission. James’ epistle defines it this way, “So it is a sin for the person who knows to do what is good and doesn’t do it” (Jas. 4:17). Over a lifetime, we are far more likely to regret inactions and omissions more than mistaken actions.

How can you and your church be a “rescue shop” to those people for whom “death is coming?” Where can you volunteer? What resources can you provide? How much can you give to preserve life? No one can do everything, but everyone can do something. Be a champion for life.

1. R. Mark Baxter, *Finish: Starting Is Easy, But Finishing Makes the Difference* (Mustang, OK: Tate, 2010), 35.