

The Sanctity of Human Life

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Made in the Image of God

For Christians, it is the fact that we are made in the image of God that gives people substance, honor and the very need to preserve and protect life. The right to life along with the urgency to protect and defend it does not come from the law, or the Courts, or any person's opinion. It comes from God himself. The concept that all human life is sacred is rooted in the Bible.

We begin to understand the sanctity of human life in Genesis 1:27 (NIV): "So God created man - in his own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." Every person that exists is made in the image of God. Human beings are God's greatest earthly creations because we are made in His image.

"Made in the image of God" means that we are unique beings, reflecting attributes of God including; intellectual, emotional, spiritual and moral. Every good character trait we have reflects God's image including: love, joy, peace, faithfulness, goodness, gentleness, patience, self-control and kindness.

God claims authorship over our creation.

Deuteronomy 32:39 See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand.

1 Samuel 2:6 The LORD brings death and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and raises up.

Genesis 1:27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Does the Bible include the unborn when it says He made us in His image? To answer that we must also answer the question "What is a person?" "When do we become a person?" And "When does life begin?" A person is defined simply as 'a human being - a homo sapiens - regarded as an individual.' When does the life of a person begin? Science shows us without a doubt that life begins at conception. The creation of a human being, the beginning of life, the beginning of a person, is one of God's most amazing miracles. At the moment of conception, a unique person—body, soul and spirit—comes into existence.

An egg and a sperm unite, each with 23 chromosomes combine to create one cell—the beginning of new life. Everything that will define that person in the future, sex, height, health, intelligence, etc. is included in those 46 chromosomes. That person is absolutely unique in every aspect.

Never before and never again will a person exist like the one just created.

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The question “When does a fetus or a preborn baby become a person” can best be rephrased into the question “When do we stop becoming a Person?” If a preborn child in the womb is not a human being, then what is it? When is a human being not a person? If we know that human life begins at conception, and this fact has unarguable scientific backing, when does a human being begin to be a person, if not at the beginning? The answer is clearly we became a person when we began to exist—at conception. There is no morally significant difference between the fetus or embryo that you once were and the person that you are today.

There are many arguments given as to why a preborn baby does not qualify as a person, but just by applying simple logic, these arguments quickly fall apart. Scott Klusendorf does a great job of responding to these arguments and showing us how to understand the value of a person using the SLED acronym.

Size - While it is true that embryos are smaller than newborns and adults, tall people are bigger than small ones—this does not make them more human. Generally speaking, men are larger than women, but this does not give them greater rights. Size does not equal value.

Level of Development - Embryos and fetuses are less developed than the adults they'll one day become. But three year old boys are less developed than 16 year-old boys. Because one child is more developed than another, should he or she have more rights? Level of development does not add value.

Environment - If you are a person when you are born, with every right imbued by law, including the right to life, then how could you possibly not be a person one minute before you are born? Or one month? Or nine months? How does being inside your mother's uterus make you less of a person than being outside of her uterus? The environment does not determine your value.

Degree of Dependency - If we are people only when we are viable, when we can sustain life by ourselves, then all those who maintain life through life-giving drugs—like diabetics—are not

persons. Or those who need oxygen machines to breathe, or those like Stephen Hawking, who must have constant care and supervision to live. Our degree of dependency does not decrease our value.

Pastor Robert Creech has stated, "Two things will be true of every human being you and I encounter: This is one who bears the image of God; and this is one for whom Christ died. These two truths mark human life as sacred, holy and precious."

Because we are all made in the image of God, and because Christ died for all of us, our life is not our own, it is sacred and has been bought with a price. While the Bible speaks clearly about God's sovereignty over all of His creation, it makes a special distinction for mankind - men and women - for we are the only beings created in the image of God. This distinction is not reserved only for followers of Christ, but it extends to every member of the human race from the first instant of conception. It is this Biblical truth that allows us to speak of the sanctity of all human life.