

Gleaner's Sunday School Lesson at First Baptist Church

September 27, 2020 Good Morning Gleaners:

Unit of Study: After God's Own Heart: A Fresh Look at the Ten Commandments

We are taking a fresh look at the 10 Commandments with a focus on how obedience frees us to do and be in Christ. In the briefest and clearest of statements, God has revealed to us the way to relate to Him and others.

Topic of Session #4: Honor Life

Scripture: Primary source of this lesson: Bible Studies for Life, Senior Adult Personal Study Guide p. 48, or open your Bible to **Exodus 20:13; 1 Samuel 26:7-11, 22-25**

Prayer: Father God, we praise your Name today as our Heavenly Father and Lord of our lives. How grateful we are for your love, mercy and strength! As church reopens, thank you for guiding us safely through these uncertain times. We pray for those burdened with worry or other cares who need your comfort. We pray for the health and safety of caretakers in our world, our families, friends, college students, teachers, youth and especially our pastors as they minister to our church family. As we study the value of human life, open our hearts and minds to the truths found in your holy Word. Forgive us when we fail You, and may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen

Introduction: Most people acknowledge the value of human life, but we don't all agree on what that means or who it includes. Our culture is divided over the value of unborn children, the elderly, and those who can't support or care for themselves. Others deem some lives not valuable, which is reflected in racism, discrimination and murder. God values all human life--He makes no exceptions--and we are to value life as He does.

Setting: At Mount Sinai the Lord initiated a covenant with the Israelites. The heart of that covenant consists of the Ten Commandments, which emphasized how they were to live in relation to God and other people. This session focuses on the 6th commandment that called on the Israelites to respect human life. Several hundred years later David, whom God had chosen as the next king of Israel, obeyed this command even though King Saul, the first ruler of Israel, sought to kill him.

Question #1: **What are some ways to show others they are valued?** God values all human life, and expects us to value life as He does. First, we can call or send cards to class members letting them know they are missed and cared about. We can make a special effort to rid our hearts/minds of any harboring racism or discrimination, and we can use our time or money to support state and local missions that meet the needs of orphans, the homeless, those who are hungry, unwed mothers, the poor, disabled, or

the forgotten elderly. A perfect example of valuing others is seen through one of our members who volunteers her time weekly assisting at the local Hospice as well as Kingdom Care. Giving her time, skill, and energy has to have an impact on letting the patients as well as staff at those facilities know that she honors and values human life.

The Point: Respect human life as God does.

Read Exodus 20:13 (page 50)

Verse 13: Do not murder Murder is used exclusively in reference to the malicious, intentional action to kill an innocent person--It is premeditated. Jesus made it clear in the Sermon on the Mount that murder can take other forms. We are not to destroy another's life through hate or defamation which are often rooted in bitterness and unforgiveness. These feelings can affect others around us and lead to our own spiritual and emotional death. The motive behind murder is anger according to Matt. 5:21-22.

Note: God commanded the Israelites to put to death those who committed murder (Ex 21:12), adultery,(Lev. 20:10) idolatry, (Ex. 22:20) and human sacrifice(Lev. 20:1-5). In certain instances killing another person in war was allowable (Deut. 13:15; 1 Sam. 15:3).

Question #2: What are some core truths that serve as the foundation of the command, "Do not murder?"

- Human life is precious to God--and it should be precious to us.
- Murder can take other forms.
- We are not to destroy another's life through hate or defamation.
- Hatred and defamation come rooted in bitterness and unforgiveness.
- Hate is a form of murder of the other person, but also affects our lives in a negative way.
- Christ has called us to live a life of love; He alone is the one with authority to bring death and give life.

Read 1 Samuel 26:7-11 (page 52) Background: David had been anointed as the new king of Israel, but King Saul did not accept God's will and repeatedly tried to kill David who was a threat to his dynasty. David was on the run from Saul for several years. On this occasion David was living in the wilderness of Ziph (19mi south of Jerusalem and 15 mi.west of the dead sea) The local people informed Saul who set out with 3000 soldiers to find and kill David. David learned of Saul's presence and when dark, approached Saul's camp from an adjoining hill. Army camps had equipment and animals on the outside as barriers. Soldiers slept inside with commanders at the center.

Verse 7: That night, David and Abishai (David's nephew) with a mercenary force of 600 men, approached Saul's camp. No soldiers were on guard, and Saul slept **in the**

inner circle with his **spear stuck in the ground by his head** that he could grab quickly if needed for protection. **Abner** (Saul's cousin who was commander of the army) **and the troops were lying around him.**

Verse 8: Then Abishai said to David, **“Today God has delivered your enemy to you. Let me thrust the spear through him into the ground just once. I won't have to strike him twice!”** Abishai was asking permission to take care of David's problem!

Verse 9: **But David said “Don't destroy him, for who can lift a hand against the Lord's anointed and be innocent?”** **Don't destroy him** is similar to the title of 3 of David's psalms (57-59) 2 of which relate to events when hunted by Saul. David wanted to be innocent in God's sight--not liable for God's judgment because of sin.

Verse 10: David added, **“As the Lord lives, the Lord will certainly strike him down: either his day will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish.**

Verse 11: However, because of the Lord, I will never lift my hand against the Lord's anointed. **Instead, take the spear and water jug by his head, and let's go.”** David echoed his earlier vow in the cave that he would never do anything to injure Saul, **the Lord's anointed.** The spear represented Saul's power while the contents of the water jug represented his life. David figuratively held both of these in his hands. His choice to honor life shows up clearly in this account. He left the matter in God's hands, and the two men left Saul's camp.

Question #3 (page 54) When have you been in a situation where others were telling you to do something, but you knew it was not the right thing to do? In high school after a school dance, my granddaughter refused to stay with her date and group of friends who had plans of which she didn't approve. She was able to get a ride home early and actually lost membership in that group of friends. Today she is very happy in college with new valued friendships.

Read 1 Samuel 26:22-25 (p. 54) Next we consider David's interchange with Saul.

Verse 22: After retreating to a distant mountain, David shouted to Abner, the king's general. David then held up the **king's spear**, the symbol of the king's authority, and offered to return it if one of Saul's **young men** would **come over and get it.** After Saul acknowledged David's voice, he confessed his sin, noted his foolishness and vowed he'd never harm David. Saul asked him to “come back.” David learned not to trust Saul's words, so there would be no reconciliation.

Verse 23: David said, **The Lord will repay every man for his righteousness and his loyalty.** (**Righteousness** means right behavior based on God's standards, especially in human relationships, and **loyalty** pictures someone who supports or upholds what God has said--who

is faithful or loyal to the Lord and His covenant stipulations.) **I wasn't willing to lift my hand against the Lord's anointed, even though the Lord handed you over to me today.**

Verse 24: Just as I considered your life valuable today, so may the Lord consider my life valuable and rescue me from all trouble. David asked that God would treat him as he had treated Saul. He had considered Saul's life valuable. David didn't presume upon God, but knew the Lord respects human life and thus asked God to value his life.

Verse 25: Saul said to him. "You are blessed, my son David. You will certainly do great things and will also prevail." Then David went on his way, and Saul returned home. Saul had a momentary heart change. David's behavior encouraged Saul to stop the chase at least for the time being.

Question #4: How can believers speak up for those whose lives have been devalued by the world? Our author compares the devaluing of life spreading through the church to metastatic cancer. This leads us to remember the plight of Christians in our world: approximately a quarter of a billion believers around the world face religious persecution and thousands die annually for their beliefs. And, an estimated 56 million humans die each year through abortion. We must consider how we can honor lives through prayer, contributions, acting justly while pursuing life and liberty for those at risk, and walking humbly by considering others more important than ourselves.

Summary: (1) We need to value human life because God created every person in His image. (2) We are not to destroy another's life through hate or defamation. (3) We have no justification for angrily, intentionally, vengefully murdering another individual. (4) We respect life by leaving vengeance in the Lord's hands. (5) We respect life by treating every life as equally valuable. (6) We respect life by refusing to return evil for evil. (7) We respect life by acknowledging God's authority over it.

Engage (p. 52): Are you living with bitterness in your life? What was the cause? Is God leading you to forgive someone who hurt you?

Live it Out (p. 57): How will you actively seek to show value to all life? (1) Check your attitude. If you consider some people more important than others, confess and repent. (2) Check your words. Examine how you devalue life through the words you speak to others or about others. (3) Check your actions. Look for concrete ways you can affirm the value of life in your spheres of influence. All life has value. It is up to each of us to affirm and validate this in what we think, say and do.

Prayer is that God will help us be mindful that all human life is valuable to Him and should also be for us. **Watchword:** May the Lord watch between me and thee while we are absent one from another. Stay healthy, stay safe, and have a great week!

