

## Week 36

# Sanctity of Life: God Made You, Before Birth, For A Purpose

## + Introduction

Michael's mother got pregnant when she was 14 years old. At 24 weeks, she decided to abort him. She went into her bathroom and pushed him out, placing him into a plastic garbage bag and intended to throw him away. But she heard him crying inside the bag, and she could not go through with it. So, she removed him from the bag and took him to the hospital. Michael was 2 pounds in the NICU (neonatal ICU). A couple wanted to adopt Michael, but the doctors said he was unlikely to survive, and if he did, he would likely be blind, deaf, or have cerebral palsy. The adoption judge told them, "don't do it." But the parents said, "he is the one God wants us to adopt." The parents are the hero of Michael's story. Michael is one of 400 children they fostered. Just like Michael, **God Made You, Before Birth, For A Purpose.**

## + God Made You

From the moment a parent tells a child about the proverbial birds and bees, there is an understanding of the physical and scientific aspects of conception. However, we leave out a major ingredient if we simply leave it with the physical and scientific elements of procreation, conception, and birth. In fact, we believe that without this element, the physical and scientific would not produce what it conceives.

From Genesis 1 and 2 it is clear that God is Creator. He created not only the heavens and earth, the animals, and mountains; God created man and woman in His image (Genesis 1:27). There should be great comfort and reverence knowing that God made you. God told Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 1:28). God is the source of life.

Look at some of the verses that remind us of that truth.

- **Job 10:8a** “Your hands fashioned and made me altogether”
- **Psalms 139:13-14a** “For You created my innermost parts; You wove me in my mother’s womb. I will give thanks to You, because I am awesomely and wonderfully made;”
- **Jeremiah 1:4-5** Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”
- **Isaiah 49:1** Listen to Me, you coastlands, And pay attention, you peoples from afar. The Lord called Me from the womb; From the body of My mother He named Me.

God is still creating people. God made each of us. What God creates is sanctified. The word “sanctified” simply means to be set apart. God has set apart each unique human at the moment of conception and beyond. A level playing field for all humans is right after the baby comes out of the birth canal. Every baby has one thing in common; they need to be cared for and protected. There is a helplessness and vulnerability of a newborn baby that unites us from every country, every skin color, every religion, every dialect, and bank account. Those basic needs of being cared for and protected are something that no one ever grows out of, whether male or female. We will always be humans, not a product, not property, not disposable, but created by God.

The Bible tells of a fortune-telling girl who was demon-possessed (Acts 16:16-19). When Paul cast out the demon, her owners were incensed, not because they were concerned for the girl but because they had lost income. They saw her as a product, not a person. Modern culture does not value the life of many, including unborn babies, humans that are trafficked, and populations under oppressive rule. The sanctity of life begins in the womb but reaches far beyond the womb.

In his book *Unimaginable*, author, and pastor Jeremiah Johnston says this about ancient slavery, “For all of its splendor and ancient glory, there is a detestable side to the city of Ephesus: the slave market. For two hundred years (100BC –100AD), Ephesus was the headquarters of the Roman slave trade. A modern individual would find the market horrifying. Would-be buyers were able to inspect the “stock” (individuals). Often, they were nude. Slaves were valued by appearance, age, physique, education, skill-set and, yes, the condition of their teeth.”<sup>1</sup> He continues, “Although the demographics of antiquity are hard to estimate, some accounts are that in the first century BC, as much as 40 percent of the population in the Roman Empire were slaves or servants.”<sup>2</sup>

Today humans are traded like objects, most commonly for forced labor and sexual slavery. Women and children are trafficked into the commercial sex industry (i.e., prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation). Men are trafficked into hard labor jobs. Children are trafficked into labor positions in textile, agriculture, and fishing industries. Human trafficking is big business with annual global revenues of \$32-\$150 billion, in which 45 million are people trapped.<sup>3</sup> Houston is known to be one of the central locations for human trafficking.

Both slavery and human trafficking are wrong. God creates every person, as Scripture says, at conception. You may agree. So why make an obvious point? Some may not realize they are part of

the problem. You may not be part of the underworld or have bargained with a mobster for the use of an individual. However, if you use prostitution or pornography, then you are in human trafficking. Each life created by God is a person, not a product.

Each person is unique and special. God created us in His image, but sin entered the world when Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden, and we now live in a fallen world. Yes, God created us, but that does not mean we are perfect. People frequently have physical problems or abnormalities at birth, such as respiratory maladies (asthma), muscular deficiencies such as muscular dystrophy, psychological abnormalities like downs syndrome, and other physical and mental propensities such as obesity, violence, alcoholism, sexual tendencies. In addition, all humans have a spiritual problem at birth. *“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned”* (Romans 5:12). Our inherited corrupt sin nature affects us physically and spiritually. There are aspects of us that God did not intend. God does not cause abnormalities, but He allows them.

God has foreknowledge, and we have free will. God made you, and you are not perfect. We do not fully understand these paradoxes, but we can trust and obey God. God’s Scripture reveals what He wants us to know, and we can trust Him for the rest.

## + Before Birth

The Bible is clear and consistent that life begins before birth. Look at these Scriptures that remind us of that truth.

- **Psalm 139:16** Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Thy book they were all written, the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.
- **Isaiah 49:1b** The Lord called Me from the womb; from the body of My mother He named Me.
- **Jeremiah 20:17** Because he did not kill me before birth, So that my mother would have been my grave, and her womb ever pregnant.
- **Psalm 78:6** That the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born.

In the 19th and 20th Centuries, philosophy leaders reached different conclusions than the Bible. Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872) said man made God. Charles Darwin (1809-1882) posited that humans evolved from animals. Karl Marx (1818-1883) developed the theory of socialism and communism. Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) said God is Dead, which led to justification for racism and human superiority. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) theorized that childhood sex issues cause adult behavior.<sup>4</sup>

The consequences of such human philosophy were devastating. Massive loss of human life resulted. Thoughts matter. For example, in the 20th Century alone, atheist thinkers killed millions,

including in Korea, Ki Song Ju (1912-1994) killed over 1 million people,<sup>5</sup> in Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh (1890-1969) killed 1.3 million people,<sup>6</sup> in Russia, Joseph Stalin (1878-1953) killed 20 to 25 million people, in China, Mao Zedong (1893-1976) killed 30 to 45 million people,<sup>7</sup> in Germany, Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) killed 53 to 54 million people<sup>8</sup> and in the USA, abortion (1970-today) killed 65 million unborn babies.

What we are experiencing in our culture and throughout the world is nothing new. Children, especially babies, have always been vulnerable. Even in biblical times, there was a common practice of "infant exposure," which was leaving a baby outside to die or be killed by animals.

"In a legal document that dates to 8 BC, a recently widowed but pregnant woman asserts that she "retains the right to expose the infant (that she is carrying) and to unite herself to another man." The implication is that the infant may be a hindrance to her remarriage. Today our society would call that "family planning." Most of the time, it was the female infant who was cast out to die. Roman Law of the Twelve Tables, which may date in its earliest form to the fifth century BC, required fathers to put to death any child who was deformed. Pagan practice of child sacrifice took place in the ancient Near East. The wicked do not know God, who created humanity in his own image. They think nothing of murdering children and destroying what God forms in the womb."<sup>9</sup>

Even today, we deal with this issue. The word abortion itself is polarizing. The reality is most of us know someone personally who has had an abortion. There should always be grace and love when addressing the topic without compromising the issue. Perhaps we can learn from the most famous verse in all of Scripture which talks about how much God loved the world.

**JOHN 3:16** *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Notice that God loved the world. He did not specify a religious system, a denomination, a political party, a region, or a country of the world. God so loved the world that He gave the entire world the very same gift- His Son, Jesus. His love was so far-reaching that He wanted it to be forever. God loved the world so much He did not want anyone to die, but everyone to have everlasting life.

As we have already mentioned, we live in a fallen, broken, imperfect world. When sin entered the world, everything changed. Yet God loved this broken world so much He gave the world a second chance. Our love for others should be the same. Let us love the world so much that we encourage life that has no end in the spiritual way and life that is not ended prematurely by a choice that goes against the teachings of God's Word. But above all, let us always show God's love to all people.

We believe abortion is wrong based on God's perspective revealed in the Bible. The harsh reality is the statistics of unborn babies aborted are staggering. Since 1973, more than 60 million babies have been aborted in the United States, according to the CDC.<sup>10</sup> There are multiple reasons why a woman chooses to do this, but it is our responsibility and opportunity to encourage them to allow the life God created in the womb to travel through the birth canal and take that first breath with the hopes of living a fulfilled life with hope and purpose.

## + For A Purpose

God told Jeremiah, *“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations”* (Jeremiah 1:50). “Knew” means close, personal, intimate relationship. Before Jeremiah was conceived, God had singled him out to be His spokesperson to Israel. Jeremiah had been set apart for this ministry.<sup>11</sup>

God has a purpose for you. It's been said that to try to explain divine election with your finite mind could cause you to lose your mind! But explain it away, and you could lose your soul.<sup>12</sup> God had plans for you before you were conceived in your mother's womb. God made you to fit His plans. You are “built to suit.” Find out why God made you the way He did, so you can see His purpose for you.

For example, God built me with unique physical features, craft, and business talents, and spiritual gifts, which He uses for His Kingdom. I have a unique genetic, physical defect called Epidermolysis Bullosa, which cause me to easily get blisters on my hands and feet.<sup>13</sup> My blisters limit my ability to do many things I would greatly enjoy, such as hiking in the wilderness and running long distances. But God knew what He was doing when He designed me. When my feet get swollen, and I am unable to walk comfortably, I have learned to think hard before I move in order to avoid pain. These times of highly motivated planned movements caused my mind to identify the most efficient way to do things, which has been extremely beneficial in my business career, including evaluation and design of efficiencies in processes and workflows.

What we are is God's gift to us; what we do with it is our gift to Him.<sup>14</sup>

Back to Michael's story: Premi-babies at 24 weeks do not have the lung capacity to cry. But God had a plan for Michael's life. So, God gave Michael the ability to cry in the garbage bag. Michael is now 42 years old and has been a pastor for over ten years. Michael not only lived, but he is fulfilling God's purpose for his life. God has a plan for you too. God made you before birth for a purpose.

## + Love and Truth

Truth without love is harsh. Love without truth is chaos. The proper delivery of truth combined with love regarding the sanctity of life requires a relationship. With a relationship comes the responsibility to share truth. In this lesson, we discussed God's truth about the sanctity of life. If you or someone you know has experienced an abortion, an addiction, or seen others as a product/service or have a close relationship with someone who has, there is hope, grace, and forgiveness. Regardless of where you are on this journey, God loves you. His mercy and grace are available to you. God heals and restores that which is hurt and broken. God is Jehovah Rapha (God Healer). He will always meet you where you are in times of grief, loss, brokenness, regret, and sadness. The beauty of God is revealed in the love and forgiveness from God.

## + Conclusion

With such a heavy topic as this, the question automatically arises as what can we do? We can take very specific action steps:

**Pray** - Please pray that our country repents, political leaders change laws, and judges apply the constitution and biblical moral values. Also, pray for freedom from global human trafficking, slavery, and racism. Pray for pregnant mothers to choose life, including adoption.

**Vote** - Register and vote in every election, including government officials, based on issues such as abortion and cloning embryos.

**Teach** - Educate your children. Have you explained sanctity of life to your children? Do they understand life begins at conception? Do your teenage and young adult sons and daughters trust that you will love them even if they have a baby outside of marriage?

**Serve** - Volunteer or give to centers, including the Texas Alliance for Life - [www.txchoose-life.org](http://www.txchoose-life.org), Crisis Pregnancy Center, where you can counsel young pregnant women about the sanctity of life. You can connect pregnant women with options/choices such as keeping the baby and adoption.

**Adopt** - Prayerfully consider adopting a baby. Other families in our church have adopted children and are awesome examples providing a support system. In an open adoption, the birth mother remains involved. Adults who were adopted love their birth mother and adopting parents. Also, you can adopt a pregnant woman to help her through the pregnancy and parenting years. Many abortions are by teens that lack parental help.

**Choose Life** - If you are pregnant, God created your child, and He has a plan for that life. Do not abort. If you have used pornography or slave labor, seek God. Start by confessing to Him what you have done. Then seek godly biblical counseling. See a pastor or call the Second Baptist Church counseling center. God loves you, wants to help you, and can use you for His kingdom.

**Love** - Reflect the love of Jesus Christ in all you do and with everyone you meet. As Christ-Followers, we are called to love and not judge. When we realize that God created each person with a purpose, it will change our perspective. As we turn our eyes to Jesus, let our eyes see the world with His compassion, grace, mercy, and forgiveness. As we listen to God, let us hear the cries of this world with patience and understanding. May we be the hands and feet of Christ to this world God loved so much He gave His Son.

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<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah Johnston, *"Unimaginable"*, Bloomington, 2017, Bethany House, 51. <sup>2</sup> Johnston, *Unimaginable*, p. 53.

<sup>3</sup> Johnston, *Unimaginable*, p.181.

<sup>4</sup> Johnston, *Unimaginable*, p. 75-95.

<sup>5</sup> Johnston, *Unimaginable*, p. 137.

<sup>6</sup> Johnston, *Unimaginable*, p. 136.

<sup>7</sup> Johnston, *Unimaginable*, p. 134.

<sup>8</sup> Johnston, *Unimaginable*, p. 111.

<sup>9</sup> Johnston, *Unimaginable*, p. 57.

<sup>10</sup> [https://abort73.com/abortion\\_facts/us\\_abortion\\_statistics/](https://abort73.com/abortion_facts/us_abortion_statistics/)

<sup>11</sup> John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Dallas, Victor, 1989.

<sup>12</sup> Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Colorado Springs, Victor, 2003, p. 544.

<sup>13</sup> US Department of Health and Human Services, "Living with Epidermolysis Bullosa", National Institute of Health, 1984.

<sup>14</sup> Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*.