

The Journey of a Life-Giver
Fourth Edition

*An International Training Curriculum for the
Equipping of Pastors and Church Leaders
on the Sanctity of Human Life*



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How to Use this Curriculum

The Journey of a Life Giver has been translated into many languages and taught in many cultures. It is important to LIFE International that this material be easily adaptable for each culture and situation.

In addition to the core content to be taught, there are “Recommended Session Times” and “Training Helps” in this guide that assist in teaching and encouraging participants to dialogue. Below is a description of these helps:

Recommended Session Times: These are suggested times for teaching each individual session. It is the total recommended time for the session including teaching, activities, and discussion.

Keep in mind that although sessions are arranged and presented here discretely, there need not be a formal division between separate sessions (“Session two has ended, and now session three has begun.”). The sequence of sessions should not be adjusted, but some sessions can very naturally be combined into a single extended time of teaching and discussion.

TRAINING HELPS

These boxes appear throughout the manual separated from the core content. The training helps give ideas for teaching and suggest possible questions to be asked to encourage dialogue between participants. Occasionally they contain examples of how things could be stated. Remember to pause and wait for responses when you ask a question.

Appendix Activities: Some “Training Helps” refer to activities to be used within a session. Instructions for these activities are explained in detail in an appendix at the end of each chapter.

The manual also includes space at the bottom of most pages (entitled “Notes”) for the learner to take notes, complete exercises, and record his or her reflections during the seminar.

Introduction and Overview

During this session, the host(s), leaders, and participants will all have a chance to meet each other and discuss the prayer activity they are presently engaged in, as well as discuss the opportunities for intercessory prayer for the upcoming Church Leader Training.

Recommended time for this session: 60 minutes

The Participants Will:

1. Introduce themselves to the group and provide a brief description of their current prayer activity, for themselves and for the groups they are involved with.
2. Identify the purpose(s) for their participation in the Advance Prayer Initiative.
3. Understand how their personal life journeys can be used to accomplish God's purposes.

Introduction

We are living in a day and time where the devaluation of human life and the sin of abortion are destroying our nations. In every people group, from the pre-born to the elderly, we are seeing the devaluing and destruction of those created in the image of God. Even more alarming is the fact that this is occurring in the Church as much as in the secular world.

The destruction of human life breaks our Heavenly Father's heart. The Spirit of God is awakening the Church to the sanctity of human life violations against those He created in His own image. Forgiveness and redemption are available to the whole world through Jesus' shed blood, and God is inviting us to join Him in this redemptive work! God is redeeming, healing, and restoring hearts and lives that have been wounded by abortion, and we can join Him in this life-giving work throughout all nations.

The Church Leader Training Initiative

The Journey of a Life-Giver is an international training curriculum designed to equip pastors and church leaders on the sanctity of human life. This curriculum is Bible-based and is therefore universal in nature, adaptable for any region of the world where human life is devalued and diminished, particularly by abortion.

The Advance Prayer Initiative

"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14)

A crucial component to the success of the Church Leader Training is the establishment of a foundation of prayer for the event. Approximately 30 days before the scheduled Church Leader Training, an **Advance Prayer Initiative** is coordinated for the purpose of generating intercessory prayer in support of those who will be attending the upcoming training, and to agree with God's desires for life-giving activity within the region.

Prayer, intercession, and worship are spiritual weapons that God has given to the Church to stand against the schemes and plans of the enemy who seeks to hinder God's work (Ephesians 6:10-20). Prayer also prepares the hearts of the Church Leader Training attendees to receive biblical truths about the sanctity of human life, and it transforms the individual's perspective on abortion.

In Luke 3:4-6 we see John the Baptist preparing the way of the Lord Jesus. In a similar way, the Advance Prayer Initiative will prepare the way—through prayer—for the Word of truth to be revealed in the hearts of God's people so that transformation takes place.

A Note About Seating Arrangements:

To encourage dialogue among attendees and hosts/leaders, all participants should sit in a circle when possible. If the facility or group size makes this difficult, the goal should be to have as many people facing each other as possible, avoiding straight rows where everyone is looking at the back of someone else's head.

Exercise:

1. Host(s) and leadership can introduce themselves to the group, providing brief information about themselves, such as: name, nation of residence (if different than host nation), prayer involvement.
2. Invite participants to introduce themselves to the group, providing the same information as the hosts.
3. Invite participants to answer the following questions in order to learn about the prayer activity already taking place within the participants' communities and churches:
 - What kinds of things do you pray about? How are you led to pray?
 - Why do you pray? What do you believe that prayer will accomplish?

- What role does Scripture play in your prayer activity?
4. Discuss as a large group the various responses to these questions. Remember that there are no “right” answers; this discussion will simply lay the foundation for the activity of the next day and a half.

The Objectives of the Advance Prayer Initiative

Learning **how** to pray (“1. Bow your head. 2. Close your eyes. 3. Kneel.” Etc.) is *not* an objective of the Advance Prayer Initiative. The primary aims of the Advance Prayer Initiative are to interact about **why** it is important that we pray for the upcoming Church Leader Training, and discover together **what** we should pray for in relation to the upcoming event.

God has raised up the attendees of the Church Leader Training to positions of authority and leadership, and there is a high calling upon them to defend the sanctity of human life. While participants of the Advance Prayer Initiative may share this calling, the goal of the Advance Prayer Initiative is to intercede on behalf of the attendees of the Church Leader Training, and to pray for the event itself.

By the conclusion of the Advance Prayer Initiative, participants will:

1. Recognize and be able to express the need for intercessory prayer as the first phase of the Church Leader Training initiative.
2. Be equipped to restate the basic theology of the sacredness of human life.
3. Be envisioned and commissioned to intercede before, during, and after a Church Leader Training event.
4. Develop a plan for prayer—along with a guide to help focus prayer for the event—then begin to pray together.
5. Identify:
 - a. Biblical foundations of life
 - b. Global abortion and regional realities
 - c. Church Leader Training content
6. Be given the opportunity to experience personal transformation.

Education and awareness are valuable for equipping intercessors to engage in their God-given forerunner role. Your prayers can be more targeted and your heart will be moved to return more often to prayer as you learn about the needs that are before you. This is why much of the Advance Prayer Initiative will be dedicated to discussing the issues facing your nation, and to planning a concrete strategy to strengthen your intercession in advance of the Church Leader Training. You have been invited to participate in this Advance Prayer Initiative because you have been identified as a person who believes in, and demonstrates in your daily walk, the power of prayer. The Advance Prayer Initiative then is an opportunity to gather with like-minded intercessors that are most likely to achieve identified outcomes.

Every Follower of Christ is on a Journey

The training curriculum for the Church Leader Training was entitled *The Journey of a Life-Giver* because a unique part of every church leader’s life journey is a movement toward understanding God’s heart concerning the issue of human life, and learning how to share His heart with other believers. Each individual is at a different place in this journey, but by the time a Church Leader Training has been scheduled, the host has learned enough that he or she recognizes the value of gathering regional leaders in order to equip them for life-giving ministry within their communities and nations.

This journey, however, is not limited to pastors or church leaders! Every follower of Christ has been led by God’s Holy Spirit to some specific action. (Even the newest of believers have—at the very least—responded to God’s call to surrender their lives to Him.) As believers mature, and learn to discern the voice of God’s Holy Spirit, they can better recognize when He is leading, prompting, directing, and sometimes *compelling* them to action—to take the next step on their own journeys.

Exercise:

1. Advance Prayer Initiative host can take about ten minutes to share his or her journey of recognizing the significance of the sacredness of human life and its integration with the Gospel message. *Note: This testimony is not meant to encompass the host's initial conversion story, but to highlight the time when God revealed the critical need to value all human life.*
2. The host should answer these questions for the group:
 - What did God impress upon your heart?
 - What was your starting point before you were led by the Holy Spirit to take this important step?
 - Why is hosting a Church Leader Training important to you? What do you think can be accomplished in your region?

A simple way for you to “let your light shine before others” is by telling the story of your journey. Trust the Lord that He will then use your story to accomplish His purposes in the lives of other people, and He may even teach you something new in the telling of it! It can sometimes be easy to feel that other people’s stories are “more” than your own: *more* compelling, *more* inspirational, *more* redemptive, *more* encouraging. But that’s not true. Your story is *uniquely* compelling and inspirational. And any story that includes an encounter with Jesus will be redemptive and encouraging to others, because each of us has been individually lifted out of the mire and mud to have our feet set on a rock (Psalm 40)!

The Sacredness of Human Life

During this session, participants will discuss the truth that mankind is unique among all creation because men and women are made in the image of God. All human life is of equal worth and immeasurable value from conception to natural death, because man is made in the image of God.

Recommended time for this session: 60 minutes

The Participants Will:

1. Learn what the Bible says about the value of human life.
2. Explain why human life is valuable.
3. Recognize that every human being—male or female—is of equal value in the eyes of God.

Exercise

1. Divide into five equally sized small groups.
2. Have each small group read one of the following passages and discuss what they think God is teaching us about His creation and about the value of human life.
 - **Genesis 1:27:** “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”
 - **Psalms 139:13-16** “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”
 - **Jeremiah 1:5** “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart.”
 - **Genesis 9:7** “As for you be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on earth and increase upon it”
 - **John 3:16-17** “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”
3. Assign a scribe from each group to record key points from the discussion.
4. Reconvene large group and invite one individual from each small group to share their reflections with the large group.

Introduction

The Bible teaches that when God created man, He created him in the image and likeness of God: “So God created mankind in his own image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:26–27). The foundational principle of this truth is also the moral and practical foundation for the protection and defense of human life at all ages and stages. **All human life is of equal worth and immeasurable value, from conception to natural death, because man is made in the image of God.**

“Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being” (Genesis 2:7). Man is unique because God breathed life directly into him—*this is not true of any other living creation*. Man is also set apart from animals due to our spiritual comprehension and because we have a conscience, both of which come directly from God.

Men and women are intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual beings that will never cease to exist; all of these attributes are reflections of characteristics possessed by God. God’s image is also reflected in every virtuous character trait we possess: love, faithfulness, justice, righteousness, patience, kindness, humility, forgiveness, mercy, and grace.

The Bible speaks clearly about God’s sovereignty over all of His creation, but 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 extends to every member of the human race.) God has made each of us with a purpose (Psalm 100:3, Psalm 139:13–16a), and He has a plan for our lives that begins at conception—the first moment of our existence (Jeremiah 1:4–5).

Exercise

1. Divide into small groups of 3-5 people each.
2. Have each small group discuss their answers to the following discussion questions:
 - How would you define the sacredness of human life? Write down a brief definition.
 - What are the sanctity of human life violations in your region/country?
 - What is currently being done to address these issues?
 - What would you say is the body of Christ's responsibility and role in addressing these violations?
 - Are there any sanctity of human life violations that are outside of the Church’s responsibility to address?

3. Assign a scribe from each group to record key points from the discussion.
4. Reconvene large group and invite one individual from each small group to share their responses with the large group.

Every Human Being Is Equally Valuable

Our value to God remains the same no matter what differences there are among us in sex, age, skin color, ethnic background, caste or tribe, religion, language, nationality, level of intelligence, social status and class, or other factors. Every human life is made in the image of God and therefore must be respected, treated with dignity, protected, preserved, nurtured, and developed—not disrespected, disregarded, devalued, cast aside, diminished, discarded, or killed.

Every human life is valuable from the moment of conception, and our value extends throughout our entire lifetime. An act of violence against the infirm, the weak, the handicapped, or the elderly is just as much an affront to God as an act of violence against the child in the womb.

Men and women both bear God's image, so men and women are equal in dignity and worth. One is image of God *male*, the other is image of God *female*. Although men and women have different roles in the family, different levels of physical strength, and different ways of thinking and feeling about many things, *they are both image-bearers of God, and therefore of equal value.*

A shameful reality in many nations is that cultural traditions and practices demonstrate that women are somehow less valuable than men. To treat a woman in any way as if she has less value than a man is disrespecting a person made in the image of God. Christian men, especially in nations where men have most of the power and authority, should lead the way in demonstrating the proper treatment of women by treating their spouses and all other women as equals—that is, in a godly, honorable, respectful manner.

The Mission Field Created by Abortion

Abortion is present and practiced in every nation of the world, and more than forty million unborn children are aborted around the world every year. Although abortion is the most obvious and extreme violation of the sacredness of human life, human life is devalued in numerous other ways. During this session, participants will discuss the global issue of abortion as well as the specific ways that human life is devalued within their communities and nation.

Recommended time for this session: 60 minutes

The Participants Will:

1. Recognize how abortion is an offense against God and against the unborn child.
2. Identify the ways that abortion leads to further devaluation and diminishment of human life.
3. Understand the biblical response to abortion.

TRAINING HELPS

For this section, encourage dialogue by reviewing with the group their responses (during the previous discussion) to the question: “What are the sanctity of human life violations in your region/country?” Give the group an opportunity to make additional suggestions if there are other violations that were not previously mentioned.

Introduction

In John 10:10, Jesus said, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.” This is the spiritual truth behind the many ways that human beings are devalued in the world: through slavery, subjugation, abuse, assault, and murder, which remains the ultimate offense against human life. Hundreds of thousands of people are murdered individually around the world every year. The world has also seen an even more catastrophic loss of human life throughout the last century (and throughout all of human history) as a result of genocide: the destruction of large groups, sometimes millions, of people.

TRAINING HELPS

1. Use a large metal receptacle (such as a cooking pot, can, bucket, or bowl) and approximately 5,000 small ball bearings (or small marbles, tiny stones, or dried beans*). Separate them into five cups, one each of the following quantities:
 - 12 (1,174,000 lives: Rwanda genocide)
 - 20 (2,000,000 lives: Cambodia genocide)
 - 130 (13,000,000 lives: the Holocaust/Shoah)
 - 200 (20,000,000 lives: Stalin regime)
 - 4,200 (420,000,000 lives: abortions worldwide during the past 10 years)
2. The ball bearings and receptacle should be hidden out of sight in order to minimize distraction.
3. Say: “I am going to briefly illustrate how great the problem of abortion is when compared to other horrific attacks against those created in God’s image.”
4. Ask participants to close their eyes and listen.
5. Say: “The sound of each ball bearing dropping into this bowl [or can, etc.] represents 100,000 lives lost.” Drop one ball bearing into the bowl.
6. Say: “These are the lives lost during the genocide in the African nation of Rwanda in 1994.” Pour 12 ball bearings into the bowl.
7. Say: “These are the lives lost during the genocide in the Asian nation of Cambodian in the 1970s.” Pour 20 ball bearings into the bowl.
8. Say: “These are the lives lost during the Holocaust under Germany’s Hitler.” Pour 130 ball bearings into the bowl.
9. Say: “These are the lives lost in the Soviet Union under Stalin” Pour 200 ball bearings into the bowl.
10. Say: “These are the lives lost to abortion over the past ten years.” Pour 4,200 ball bearings into the bowl.
11. After a pause, lead a prayer asking God’s forgiveness for the sin of abortion.
12. At the conclusion of the prayer, share that abortion ends the life of more than 42 million people around the world every year. We must “rescue those being led away to death” (Proverbs 24:11).

It may not be practical to collect 5,000 marbles or dried beans. Instead you could use 500 dried beans or ball bearings with two metal cans to pour the beans from one can to the other. You would pour one can out into the other can nine times to equal the sound of 4,500 beans pouring out. Keep in mind that the most audible sound will come from metal objects being poured into a metal receptacle.

We have seen that when human life is not properly valued, political leaders, people groups, and entire societies have engaged in deeply destructive behaviors. But what remains mostly unseen is another genocide that annually kills more people than all of the previous examples combined. *Abortion ends the life of more than 42 million people around the world every year.*

Just as the world often turns its back on the atrocities that are committed in neighboring nations, we have collectively turned away from the brutality of abortion and its effects within our families, communities, and nations. If it is true that all human life is equally valuable in the eyes of God, then those who profess faith in Jesus Christ *must not look away* from the great evil of abortion. But not only must we *see*, we must *act* on behalf of those who cannot defend themselves. “Rescue those being led away to death,” says Proverbs 24:11.

Violations of the Sacredness of Human Life

There are many ways in which human life can be devalued and diminished throughout its advancing ages:

- Infancy: Infanticide, exposure, abandonment
- Childhood: Sexual abuse, human trafficking
- Adolescence: Slavery, assault
- Adulthood: Prostitution, rape
- Old Age: Abandonment, euthanasia

Chief among all of these offenses, however, is abortion: the killing of unborn children.

TRAINING HELPS

Encourage dialogue by asking the group what they know about abortion in their own nation. *Is abortion legal in your nation? If so, what restrictions—if any—are in place? How many abortions take place in your community/region/nation each year?*

Abortion in the Nations

There is a concentrated global attack against the sanctity of human life and the unborn: the World Health Organization estimates that 210,000,000 conceptions occur annually, with a reported 42,000,000 lost to abortion. That’s four abortions *every three seconds*. The most dangerous place on earth for a child to be is in the mother’s womb—the very place that God intended to be the *safest* place for a child to be. Unborn children are therefore the most **hidden, unreached, and persecuted** people group on the face of the Earth!

Abortion Is the Tip of the Spear

“Tip of the spear” is a phrase sometimes used to describe circumstances where a particular action makes way for other, often more extreme, actions. The sharp tip of a hunter’s spear will pierce its prey before the wedge-shaped body of the spearhead causes further, more extensive damage to the animal. Striking an animal with the flat side of a spear will cause little damage; it is the tip that always leads the injury.

Abortion is the “tip of the spear” in regards to the devaluation of human life. Just as a spear pierces an animal’s hide and damages its internal organs, abortion “pierces” the protections upon human life and makes way for life to be threatened in other ways. Because it occurs before a person is born, abortion will always be the earliest point that a human life can be threatened.

All offenses against human life have their roots in the devaluation of human life that occurs when a unborn child is killed during abortion. If we adopt a worldview that acknowledges the value of the unborn human being, it is likely that we will understand better the value of *born* human beings. If our worldview then leads us to action in defense of the unborn child, our protections for born infants (along with children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly) will naturally follow.

TRAINING HELPS

Encourage dialogue by asking the group what we can learn from the Bible about how to respond to abortion.

The Biblical Response to Abortion

Because God's perspective regarding the unborn—that they are precious, valuable, and human—is not held worldwide, the lives of millions of children are ended before they've had a chance to experience God's plans for their lives. Furthermore, the lives of millions of women and men—as well as all of those in relationship with them—are impacted negatively by these abortions. As followers of Christ, we are required to act for many reasons.

TRAINING HELPS

Invite a participant to read each of the following Bible verses, then discuss with the group how each verse could illustrate a principle that can guide our response to abortion.

1. *God calls us to be defenders of the defenseless.*

"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy." Proverbs 31:8–9

"There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a person who stirs up conflict in the community." Prov. 6:16–19

God Himself is a defender of the widow and a father to the fatherless (Psalm 68:5). He exercises kindness, justice, and righteousness on earth (Jeremiah 9:24), and He designed us, His image-bearers, to do the same. God expects His people to defend and care for those in need and those without a voice, including the most innocent people: those not yet born.

2. *God tells us that faith without works is dead.*

"What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." James 2:14–17

Since God is sovereign, no life is an accident. Since human life is sacred, every child is precious in His sight. We believe this, and so we must act, for the Bible tells us that faith without works is dead.

3. *God gives us the ministry of reconciliation.*

"All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation." 2 Corinthians 5:18–19

Our relationship with God was made right through the atoning power of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We now have the opportunity to share His Gospel—including the truth that God values every human life—with others, including those who are facing, or those who have already made, an abortion decision. God continues to reconcile people to Himself through Jesus Christ, and He has chosen us as the messengers of that reconciliation!

Conclusion

Traditions and cultural practices have blinded believers and unbelievers alike. Most societies have become complacent about the loss of human life through abortion, and the devastation on our world due to the killing of innocent unborn children has become virtually immeasurable: 42 million lives lost every year, countless more lives

shattered, populations diminished, and societies undermined. When we don't acknowledge the incomparable value of human life, and revere its Creator, we are at risk of treating others—including the unborn—without the dignity and respect that they deserve as image-bearers of God.

The moral decay of our world is increasing—both inside and outside of the Church—and offenses against our fellow man are growing in scale and in boldness. We are engaged in activities that were inconceivable mere generations ago, and we will no doubt soon encounter previously unthinkable evils until, and unless, a biblical theology of life is adopted by individuals, families, communities, societies, and nations. Praise God that His Holy Spirit is awakening the Church of Jesus Christ (and its shepherds) to His heart for life. There is still time for His mercy and grace to redeem us, His bride, the Body of Christ.

Church Leader Training Overview

As the goal of the Advance Prayer Initiative is to generate intercessory prayer in support of the upcoming Church Leader Training, this session will provide Advance Prayer Initiative participants with a summary overview of the content that will be presented to attendees of the Church Leader Training.

Recommended time for this session: 90 minutes

The Participants Will:

1. Identify critical components of the Church Leader Training content in order to understand what Church Leader Training attendees will be presented with during the training.
2. Identify key aspects of Church Leader Training content that will inform their prayer focuses.

Introduction

The Church Leader Training offers a life-changing, sanctity-of-human-life experience that focuses on the prominent issues faced by Christians, as it prepares them to share the message of life so that their communities are transformed. This biblical foundation will prepare Church Leader Training attendees to speak to their families, congregations, and communities about issues related to the sacredness of human life.

TRAINING HELPS

For this section, encourage dialogue by asking some introductory questions to illustrate the usefulness of the Church Leader Training within a community or nation. *How does the local church react when a young, unwed teen becomes pregnant? What does the pastor do? What does the pastor not do? Why does the pastor respond in this manner? What is the local church's position on abortion? Have you ever heard a sermon in your church on the topic of abortion? What about a sermon about other human life violations such as child trafficking or spousal abuse?*

What happens during a Church Leader Training?

Pastors and church leaders:

1. See and hear the heart of Father God regarding the sanctity of human life.
2. Discover the depth of attack upon human life within churches and nations.
3. Are challenged to take the lead in restoring the sanctity of human life.
4. Experience an opportunity for personal forgiveness and healing.
5. Are equipped to increase and reinforce the role of—and need for—prayer.
6. Are encouraged and prepared to teach the Church Leader Training to others.

Church Leader Training Sessions

In a series of valuable and motivating sessions, attendees will learn about the biblical foundation for the value and dignity of human life, and will gain useful insight into how to incorporate these truths into their lives and ministries. As these truths are spread throughout families and congregations, the resulting impact will multiply within communities and regions and will act as a life-giving virus that will spread among the nations and around the globe.

Following are key points from each chapter of the Church Leader Training curriculum. Reviewing this material will give Advance Prayer Initiative participants an adequate overview of the content that will be taught during the Church Leader Training.

Chapter 1: The Church Leader's Journey Key Points

- A unique part of the church leader's life journey is a movement toward understanding God's heart concerning the issue of human life, and learning how to share His heart with other believers.
- God has always spoken—and continues to speak—to His people through various means, such as Scripture, the Holy Spirit, other people, and signs and dreams.
- Because God speaks to every person, each individual must expect God to speak and must learn how to discern His voice and understand what He is saying.

Chapter 2: The Biblical Worldview Key Points

- Everyone has a worldview: a set of beliefs and values from which we view reality and make sense of the world
- A person's worldview is the basis for making decisions in life, including the decision to abort or to carry a child to term.
- Three major categories of worldview are the biblical worldview, spiritism, and secularism/atheism.
- Abortion is one of several ways—along with abandonment, exposure, and infanticide—by which unwanted children are disposed of.
- The Christian worldview affirms the value of all human life and the full personhood of the unborn child.

Chapter 3: The Sacredness of Human Life Key Points

- Mankind is unique among all creation because men and women are made in the image of God.
- All human life is of equal worth and immeasurable value from conception to natural death, because man is made in the image of God.
- The devaluation of human life has led to the death of hundreds of millions of people and caused untold damage around the globe.
- We must value human life as God does, and choose to be life-giving in our views of and responses to other people, including the unborn.

Chapter 4: Becoming a Life-Giver Key Points

- Jesus Christ came to bring abundant life to the world, and it is His example that His disciples must follow.
- Being a life-giver is most importantly a lifestyle—how we live from day to day.
- Christ's redemption of an individual's heart enables that person to reflect His heart toward other people.
- Redeemed people reflect the heart of Christ toward others through redemptive thinking, redemptive hearing, redemptive seeing, redemptive words, and redemptive actions.

Chapter 5: Spiritual Foundations of Ministry Key Points

- Intimacy with the Lord transforms our lives and leads to effective impact in ministry.
- We must allow God to prepare our hearts for ministry.
- Meditating on and studying God's Word serves as the primary foundation of all ministry.
- We were made to worship God, and worship brings us closer to God.
- God longs for us to communicate with Him through prayer.
- Spiritual warfare equips us to better understand God, our enemy, and ourselves.
- Evangelism represents an acknowledgment that only God can meet a person's deepest needs.

Chapter 6: God's Design for the Family Key Points

- God is the creator of the institution of marriage.
- Husbands and wives are all directed by God to submit to one another.
- Marriage between one man and one woman is at the core of the Christian family.
- Children are not the property of their mothers and fathers but are equal image-bearers of God.

Chapter 7: Biblical Sexuality Key Points

- Biblical sexuality is men and women enjoying sex as the good gift God created and intended it to be within marriage.
- Biblical sexuality is men and women living according to the Bible's principles for sexual purity and holiness.
- God's purposes for man and woman in marriage are procreative (to produce children), unitive (to become "one flesh"), and to image God in the world.
- Participating in sex outside of biblical guidelines is sinful and causes spiritual, emotional, and physical consequences.

Chapter 8: Human Reproduction Key Points

- God creates human life in the womb; children are a blessing.
- Human life begins at the moment of conception, when the male sperm fertilizes the female egg; a new, unique, fully human life begins before the fertilized egg implants into the wall of the uterus.
- God is sovereign over conception and fetal development, so no child is ever "unplanned" or "unwanted" by God.
- The act of sexual intercourse results in the physical, emotional, and spiritual union of a husband and wife.
- The sex of a human being formed at conception is determined by the sperm.
- Each human being formed at conception is a distinct person, separate from his or her mother.
- The decision of a married couple to limit their number of children (with or without the use of birth control) is a moral and spiritual decision, as well as a practical one.

Chapter 9: Abortion Key Points

- Abortion is the deliberate, violent, and unnatural destruction of a living human being.
- Chemical abortions are induced through the use of drugs that are usually taken in pill form, though injections are sometimes used.
- Surgical abortion is a form of abortion in which the embryo is removed from the uterus using surgical methods.
- Many alternative methods of abortion are performed outside of the recognized medical establishment.

Chapter 10: After Abortion Key Points

- The ripple effects of abortion (beyond the death of the child) are far-reaching and affect the parents, the immediate and extended family of the aborted child, the church, the community, and more.
- Abortion can affect every area of life—physical, spiritual, emotional, and relational—for the woman and man who have participated in an abortion decision.
- God knows about all sin, including abortion, even if it has taken place in secret. He stands ready to forgive the sin of abortion and heal its wounds.
- Confession, repentance, and forgiveness of others are critical steps on the path to restoration from abortion.

Chapter 11 Repentance, Forgiveness, and Healing Key Points

- The greatest need of every man and woman ever born is forgiveness.
- The self-centered nature of sin quickly leads believers away from God, into defeat and condemnation.
- Repentance is changing one's attitude toward sin and God. It includes a change of both heart and mind.
- The work of Christ on the Cross has made forgiveness and healing possible for those that repent and turn to Jesus.

Chapter 12: Next Steps Key Points

- We must seek God's heart to discern the plans he has for us and ministry.
- It is important to share and pray with others what we feel God is speaking to us for confirmation and accountability.

Spiritual Warfare and Intercessory Prayer

During this session, participants will have an opportunity to discuss as a group the critical role of spiritual warfare and prayer in the life and ministry of believers. This session includes a general overview of the different ways that believers pray, but is not meant to serve as a formal instruction manual. Participants will be invited to share their own impressions and experiences as they have engaged in spiritual warfare and prayer throughout their lives.

Recommended time for this session: 45 minutes

The Participants Will:

1. Recognize the necessity of acknowledging and engaging in spiritual warfare.
2. Identify various types and purposes of prayer.

TRAINING HELPS

For this section, encourage dialogue by asking the group about spiritual warfare. Some possible questions include: “How have you experienced the reality of spiritual warfare?” “How have you been spiritually attacked?” “How have you experienced victory during spiritual warfare?”

Our Battle Is Not Against Flesh and Blood

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.
Ephesians 6:10-20

Our world is physical—we can see it, taste it, and touch it. But it also has a spiritual dimension. Scripture reveals that God is a spirit, we have spirits, and there are spirit beings called angels, some of whom fell with Satan and became evil spirits. In the Bible, they are often called demons, and these beings are at work in the world. The conflict between God (and His angelic warriors) and Satan (and his wicked spirits) is an ongoing battle often called spiritual warfare.

John 10:10 tells us, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; [Jesus came] that they may have life, and have it to the full.” This passage portrays the reality of this unseen battle that is being waged around us every day. When we focus our eyes on the spiritual dimension of our world, it becomes apparent that abortion is an effective tool in the arsenal of our enemy to accomplish his primary agenda: to steal, kill, and destroy. With this acknowledgment comes the revelation that our fight against abortion and the devaluation of human life is one that must be waged on our knees, in prayer.

Intercessory Prayer

“...You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ... But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” 1 Peter 2:5, 9

Exodus 40 and the book of Leviticus describe the role of the priest as one who intercedes before the Lord on behalf of the nation. The first step of preparation given to the priest by God was to cleanse his own heart, symbolized by washing at a basin outside of the Tent of Meeting. Exodus 39 also speaks of the special garments that the priest was to wear. One of the items was a breastplate, encrusted with twelve stones, with each stone representing a tribe of Israel. These stones symbolized the carrying of the nation of Israel on his heart as the priest came before the Lord. In this way the priest interceded on behalf of the nation as he offered sacrifices of atonement for the sins of the nation, and brought before the Lord the petitions of the people.

In this same way, because each of us is a member of a royal priesthood, you are being invited to intercede for upcoming Church Leader Training, and carry before the Lord the Church Leader Training participants. It is important that you prepare yourself for this assignment from a position of strength and purity, by “washing” yourself through the acts of confession and repentance. You can begin by asking the Lord to search your heart and cleanse you of any

unconfessed sanctity of life violations in your past, and ask for the Holy Spirit to anoint you as you bring your people and this event before the Lord in prayer.

Bible Verses about Intercessory Prayer

God's Word contains many examples of men and women intercessory prayer. These verses can function as a framework upon which we can model our own prayers, and they can serve as an encouragement by reminding us that intercessory prayer has always been an important and integral function of believers.

"First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men..." 1 Timothy 2:1

"With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints..." Ephesians 6:18

"On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen; All day and all night they will never keep silent You who remind the LORD, take no rest for yourselves; And give Him no rest until He establishes And makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth." Isaiah 62:6-7

Invitation to Confession and Repentance

During this session, participants will be given the opportunity to confess their own sins, including abortion, that were a violation of the sacredness of human life. God wants to restore the wounded hearts of men and women, and unresolved or unconfessed sin in this area can leave participants vulnerable to the attacks of the enemy as they intercede on behalf of the Church Leader Training attendees.

Recommended time for this session: 60 minutes

The Participants Will:

1. Respond, in whatever ways they are comfortable to respond, to an invitation to confession of sin that may hinder their intercessory prayer activity.
2. Uphold their fellow participants in prayer as God works in their hearts and lives to reveal unreconciled sin and lead them to repentance.
3. Invite the Holy Spirit to draw them closer to God's heart through confession and repentance.

TRAINING HELPS

Remind participants of their earlier discussion about the sanctity of human life violations in their community and nation. Take a few minutes to revisit the lists that were made during that time, and invite participants to make additional suggestions if there are other violations that were not previously mentioned.

Introduction

In His Word, God promises genuine and lasting healing from all sin, including the sin of abortion. God calls Himself “the Lord who heals us” (Exodus 15:26) and the One “who forgives all our sins and heals all our diseases” (Psalm 103:3). He desires for us to live life to the fullest (John 10:10)—a life full of wholeness, hope, and joy. When we turn to Him for help, He forgives us and transforms the areas of our lives that were once ruled by sin. God longs to restore the abortion-wounded hearts of men and women.

Finding Healing After Life Has Been Devalued

Remember that no sin that has been confessed has the power to destroy our lives. Consider King David, whose sin led to the death of his infant son (2 Samuel 12:1-23). When he repented, he was forgiven and restored. God’s plans and purposes for David’s life were not destroyed by David’s sin, although they could have been if he had turned away from God’s offer of forgiveness (Psalm 51:1-17).

The Bible teaches us what God’s heart is toward us, even in our sin: “The Lord is compassionate and gracious; slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will He harbor His anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear Him” (Psalm 103:8-11).

These promises of God are true for the sinner, and for the sinned-against. Confession and repentance (which are motivated by an appropriate fear of God) are crucial for accessing God’s forgiveness. When we confess our own sin, or offer forgiveness to those who have wronged us, God then “heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds” (Psalm 147:3). While God can and does heal people instantly, it is common for people to experience healing as a *journey*. For severe violations of the sanctity of human life—such as abortion, rape, domestic abuse, and incest—healing from these wounds may come in stages, over time, due to the deep and lasting effects of these sins.

God redeems and transforms the areas of our lives that were ruled by sin. God is waiting to forgive those of us who have committed sins in which the lives of others have been devalued, if we are willing to humble ourselves by confessing our sin. All we must do is turn to Him and receive His help. The cross of Jesus Christ is the only source for complete healing of the deepest hurts in our hearts!

Confession Brings Healing

Because of abortion’s high prevalence in *all* nations, you may have had an abortion or participated in an abortion decision. Your abortion may have been before you became a follower of Jesus Christ, or it may have come after your salvation.

Because you are being invited to intercede for the upcoming Church Leader Training—which will focus on the devaluation of human life—you will be vulnerable to the enemy’s attacks if you are carrying unresolved or unconfessed sin in this area. Abortion, sexual abuse, pornography use, same-sex activity, infanticide, domestic abuse, abandonment, prostitution, rape, and human trafficking are some of the common violations that have the potential to wreak havoc in the life of a believer if these sins are not surrendered to the Lord.

In order to intercede from a position of spiritual health and strength, you will be given the opportunity to come before the Lord and ask forgiveness for any sin in your life, including the sin of abortion. Additionally, you will be invited to follow the directive of James 5:16, which says, “*Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.*” When we confess our sins to the Lord He is faithful to forgive. When we confess our sins to one another and pray together, not only does the Lord forgive us; we are healed!

Exercise

1. Divide group into pairs (man/man and woman/woman).
2. Read James 5:16 together. Invite one individual to share with the other their sins of abortion, or other violation of the sacredness of human life (such as verbal, physical, or sexual abuse; abandonment; prostitution; sex trafficking; mistreatment; etc.). As you share, it can be beneficial to disclose whether you committed the act or were the victim.
3. After the confession is made, the confessor can then pray for the individual, claiming the forgiveness offered by God, and inviting healing in the individual's life (in accordance with the model of James 5:16).
4. Reverse roles and repeat. *Note: If one or both of the paired participants is uncomfortable to confess, prayer can still take place.*
5. Reflective and quiet worship can be used in the background when appropriate.
6. Invite participants to share a story or an impression from the Lord, as time allows. (These stories, though often painful, can be of great encouragement to other participants.)
7. After adequate time is given for confession and prayer, close with worship, and praise God for His mercy, goodness, and grace!

Commissioned to Pray

Through their involvement in this Advance Prayer Initiative, attendees have been equipped and prepared for the important task of interceding for the upcoming Church Leader Training. The symbolic act of commissioning can motivate each intercessor to a robust and vibrant prayer journey.

Recommended time for this session: 45 minutes

The Participants Will:

1. Respond to an invitation to accept the assignment of intercession for the upcoming Church Leader Training.
2. Receive from the host and/or leader their commissioning to intercede.

"I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one." Ezekiel 22:30

Introduction

The Lord is speaking here to the prophet about the sins of Jerusalem, particularly about the wrongful shedding of innocent blood. He also speaks to the sins of idol worship; neglecting the oppressed, widows and the fatherless; and treating parents with disrespect. In Ezekiel's time, God was speaking of judgment against the nation, unless He could find a priestly intercessor that would build up the wall and stand in the gap before Him on behalf of the people. God's desire was to extend mercy and grace so He wouldn't have to destroy the land.

Today we are facing the same sanctity of human life issues, and many others as well. The good news is that in light of the Cross of Jesus Christ, we are living in a season of God's grace, and He is redeeming and reclaiming what the enemy has stolen concerning the value and dignity of human life!

As an intercessor you are called to prepare the way for the Lord to accomplish His purposes in the nations. This present invitation, to intercede for the upcoming Church Leader Training, is a special assignment, and not one to be taken lightly. Our enemy does not want the truth about the sanctity of human life to be heard! Like John the Baptist, who "prepared the way of the Lord," you will be uniting with believers across the globe to pray in agreement for what the Lord desires to do here in this city concerning the sanctity of human life!

Invitation

If you accept the special assignment to intercede for this event, you will be entering a grave battle against the spirit of death and destruction. The enemy does not want your church to become a safe place for a young pregnant woman to come for help and support. The enemy does not want your church to become a place where guilt-ridden men and women can find forgiveness, and be set free from the bondage of sin and shame. The enemy does not want your marriage, family, and home to be strong.

The enemy may not want these things, but they are the Lord's deepest desires! Healing, redemption, and abundant life are the potential fruit of the Church Leader Training, being held in this community in about a month. Your task will be to cultivate and fertilize the soil by interceding for the participants, the hosts, the teaching team, the venue, the weather, as well as anything else the Lord may lay on your heart!

Exercise

1. Advance Prayer Initiative host(s) can form stations—around the perimeter of the room—that are manned by individuals (for example, respected leaders) or pairs (for example, pastors and their spouses).
2. Advance Prayer Initiative participants can be invited to step forward to an available praying team (at a vacant prayer station) in order to be anointed with oil, and commissioned for this special prayer assignment. (Some participants may choose *not* to come forward for commissioning.)
3. The praying team will commission each Advance Prayer Initiative participant for the assignment of interceding for the upcoming Church Leader Training. The commissioning prayer can be a simple blessing (see example below). It need not be lengthy or overly personal.
4. After all Advance Prayer Initiative participants have been commissioned for prayer, the host can reconvene the group for the final activity before Advance Prayer Initiative conclusion: working together to formulate a prayer plan in advance of the upcoming Church Leader Training.

Commissioning Prayer Example:

Heavenly Father, in the Name and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, I anoint your servant [Name], as a priestly intercessor commissioned to stand in the gap for the restoration of the sanctity of human life among Your people created in Your image. And for the message of the value of life to take root in the hearts of Your leaders and the Church. I pray that You would protect them as Your anointed servant and their family from the attacks of the wicked one and that You would fill them fresh each day with Your Holy Spirit, that they may know how to pray for this assignment. I pray that You would use them to bring Glory to Your Son, Jesus, and to advance Your Kingdom of heaven here on earth. Amen.

Advance Prayer Strategy and Intercessory Prayer

In order to accomplish the goal of generating prayer for the upcoming Church Leader Training, participants will spend time discussing and strategizing. This session will also provide a life-giving time for participants to submit their plans before their Heavenly Father, and to begin intercession for the upcoming Church Leader Training.

Recommended time for this session: 60 minutes

The Participants Will:

1. Formulate a plan to pray before, during, and after (for at least one week) the Church Leader Training.
2. Develop, if desired, a prayer guide that can be shared among participants to coordinate prayer efforts for the Church Leader Training.
3. Engage in intercessory prayer.

“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.” Colossians 4:2-4

Formulating a Plan for Prayer in Advance of Church Leader Training

This present gathering of “forerunners” presents a tremendous opportunity to intercede on behalf of the upcoming gathering of church leaders. Your prayer activity will lay the foundation for God to work in the hearts and minds of these men and women, and will fertilize the soil for the seeds that will be planted after the conclusion of the Church Leader Training.

It’s important to be intentional during these next few weeks, always allowing room for the Holy Spirit to direct your activity, but establishing a plan for what intercessory prayer will look like before, during, and after the Church Leader Training. To that end, consider the following discussion questions:

- Which person from this group would be willing and able to volunteer as a coordinator, to keep the group connected over the next few weeks?
- Can the group meet at planned gatherings over the next few weeks? How often? What are the dates, times, and locations?
- What are some planned strategies that can be enacted to guide prayer activity?
- Would it be useful to develop and share a daily prayer guide? (A template is included here for consideration.)

Some suggested prayer requests include:

- Pray that God would call His chosen participants and that they would respond.
- Pray that God would prepare and fertilize the hearts of participants.
- Pray against the attempts of the enemy to undermine Church Leader Training event through travel interruptions, sickness, personal/family attacks, etc.
- Pray for the Church Leader Training event days: for safety, open hearts, transformation, transparency, etc.
- Pray that the Church Leader Training would bear fruit in the lives and spheres of event participants.

Spending some time in discussion of these questions will benefit your assembled group, as well as the participants of the upcoming Church Leader Training. Some of the benefits include:

- Targeted and unified corporate prayer
- Guidance for individual prayer
- Assignment of a prayer coordinator who can answer questions and maintain connections
- Maintaining contact with the LIFE International *Global Prayer Shield*
- Established schedule and clear information for any upcoming prayer gatherings

Exercise

1. Divide into small groups of 3-5 people each. *Note: The host can provide valuable assistance at this point by dividing the group according to regions, especially if participants' home communities are far-ranging.*
2. Have each small group discuss their answers to the previous discussion questions.
3. Assign a scribe from each group to record key points, answers, and solutions from the discussion.
4. Reconvene large group and invite one individual from each small group to share their ideas with the large group.
5. After the individual reports, the full group can discuss the various responses in order to create a plan for prayer in advance of the Church Leader Training.
6. Accordingly, a member of the hosting team should record key conclusions from the large group discussion in order to facilitate the plan.

Once a plan has been created, the remaining time can be spent in prayer: to seal the work that has been done over the past couple days, to anoint the plans that have been made, and to intercede on behalf of the Church Leader Training attendees. Spend some time in reflection and worship, before dedicating yourselves to the activity of prayer. That's why you're here!

Conclusion

Through prayer we demonstrate obedience to our Heavenly Father, and say "yes" to His redemptive work in the world. Pastors and church leaders are appointed by God as shepherds to His flock. Just as Aaron and Hur held up Moses' arms during Israel's battle with the Amalekites, so can you "hold up the arms" of your brothers and sisters who will soon be gathering in this community to be equipped to respond to the devaluation of human life in their communities and nations.

Your faithful intercession in the time leading up to the Church Leader Training, and even for a short time afterward, will lay a firm foundation and prepare the way of the Lord to work in the hearts and minds of the Church Leader Training participants. You can also expect to receive an overflow of God's blessing as He transforms *your* life into the likeness of His Son, Jesus Christ, who modeled for all of us an intimate relationship with His Father, the source of all power and authority.

Welcome & Prayer

TRAINING HELPS

After welcoming participants, consider asking the following questions:

1. Is God speaking?
2. If God is speaking, are you listening?
3. If God is speaking and you are listening, what is He saying to you? What is He calling you to do?

The Holy Spirit will speak to us in a special way through this material. God has designed us to read this for a purpose. Our task is to listen for God's voice to understand what He is calling us to do with what we will learn. He wants us to learn, be inspired, and then *take action*.

TRAINING HELPS

Participants should understand the three main goals of the Church Leader Training:

1. **Transformation:** Participants will experience personal transformation inspired by God's Spirit.
2. **Replication:** Participants will be equipped and have the authority to replicate this same training in their own places of ministry.
3. **Multiplication:** Participants will discern how God is calling them to take action in response to the devaluing of human life where they are called to serve.

Over the course of this material you will learn about:

1. The Foundation of Life
 - Hearing God's Voice
 - The Biblical View of Human Life
2. The Giver of Life
 - Redemptive Living
 - Abiding with Christ
 - Marriage and Family
3. The Miracle of Life
 - Biblical Sexuality
 - The Biology of Sex
 - Human Fetal Development
4. The Devaluation of Life
 - Abortion and Its Effects
 - Global Life Issues
5. The Restoration of Life
 - Repentance and Forgiveness
 - Healing and Renewal
 - Taking the Next Step

The Church Leader's Journey

“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.”

John 16:13

The Learner Will:

1. Understand how his or her personal life journey can be used to accomplish God's purposes.
2. Identify the ways in which God speaks to His people.
3. Reflect on how God is calling him or her to respond to human-life issues.

Key Points

- A unique part of the church leader's life journey is a movement toward understanding God's heart concerning the issue of human life, and learning how to share His heart with other believers.
- God has always spoken—and continues to speak—to His people through various means, such as Scripture, the Holy Spirit, other people, and signs and dreams.
- Because God speaks to every person, each individual must *expect* God to speak and must learn how to discern His voice and understand what He is saying.

Scripture References

John 16:13, Psalm 40, Matthew 5:13, Matthew 5:14, 2 Timothy 3:16–17, John 16:13, 2 Samuel 12:1–15, Acts 5:33–40, Acts 9:10–19, Genesis 28:10–22, Genesis 37:6–11, Daniel 7, Matthew 1:18–21, Genesis 41, Daniel 2, Matthew 27:19

TRAINING HELPS

Recommended time for this session: 60 minutes

This introductory chapter is an opportunity for you to model for your listeners the truth that God can use every person's story, including your own, to sow life into others.

Allow participants a couple of minutes to share their story with the person next to them. To encourage dialogue, ask the participants: How does God speak to you? Think about a time when God *clearly* spoke to you. How did He speak? How did you know it was Him?

Next, give participants time in silent prayer to ask God to illuminate for each of them how He has revealed Himself and His love for people. Encourage them to ask God to reveal Himself to them more during this seminar, and to show them how their own life journey can be used to inspire others.

We call the act of traveling from one place to another a journey, yet we also speak of *life* as a journey: “The *journey* of life.” Every human’s journey starts at conception and each journey is made up of countless day-to-day events. When the journey is complete, the book is closed and the story of our earthly travels becomes a testimony for those that come behind us. **A unique part of the church leader’s life journey is a movement toward understanding God’s heart concerning the issue of human life, and learning how to share His heart with other believers.**

This journey requires pastors and church leaders to “travel” from one place of understanding to another place. In order to be prepared for the journey, it’s important to know something about your destination. You’ll need a roadmap for use along the way otherwise you may end up off course. This manual will help to equip, empower, and release you with the knowledge and understanding of God’s heart, and love, for people—each of whom was created by God in His image. Your journey can be more than a passive one in which things happen *to* you. It can be an active one in which you *become* a life-giver.

Every individual has a story to tell, and no two stories are the same. And around and among each personal story are deeper layers: stories of marriage, of family, of community, and of culture. Some chapters are full of bravery and inspirational events—experiences that perhaps encouraged you, or elevated others. Other chapters are sad or tragic, involving people, places, and events that you may want to forget about. Many experiences—whether hopeful or tragic—persist in our collective memories, and some stories have the power to impact the world for generations to come.

What Is Your Story?

It can sometimes be easy to feel that other people’s stories are “more” than your own: *more* compelling, *more* inspirational, *more* redemptive, *more* encouraging. But that’s not true. Your story is *uniquely* compelling and inspirational. And any story that includes an encounter with Jesus will be redemptive and encouraging to others, because each of us has been individually lifted out of the mire and mud to have our feet set on a rock (Psalm 40)!

You are the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13); don’t lose your “saltiness”! You are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14); don’t hide your light under a basket! A simple way for you to “let your light shine before others” is by telling the story of your journey. Trust the Lord that He will then use your story to accomplish His purposes in the lives of other people, and He may even teach you something new in the telling of it!

NOTES

God Is Speaking to Us Today

TRAINING HELPS

For this section, encourage dialogue by asking: What are the ways that God speaks to us today? In what ways has God spoken to you through scripture? Give an example of how God has spoken to you through His Holy Spirit.

Write the response of the participants on a board for all to see.

When we are attentive to the voice of God and the promptings of His Spirit, our views and assumptions about life and about other people will often be challenged. Sometimes God leads us to reevaluate our beliefs and values in order bring them into closer alignment with His position. As we become familiar with the ways in which God speaks to His followers, we are more likely to discern His voice within the noise of our daily lives.

God Speaks Through Scripture

The primary way that God speaks to us today is through His written Word, the Bible. The word of God is useful in every circumstance of our life and for every occasion. “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16–17). When God speaks, we are to listen and obey His commands.

God Speaks Through His Holy Spirit

God also speaks to His people today through His Holy Spirit. John 16:13 says, “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.” How God the Holy Spirit speaks to individual believers can vary from person to person: we may hear the Spirit speak in an audible voice, in our minds, or through impressions and feelings.

When God’s Spirit speaks to believers, we must receive this communication and compare it with the written Word of God. If God the Holy Spirit is speaking to us, whatever He says will correspond to the truth God has revealed in Scripture. The Spirit and the Word always go together in this way.

NOTES

God Speaks Through Other People

TRAINING HELPS

For this section, encourage participant dialogue by asking the following questions: How has God spoken to you through other people? Has God ever spoken to you through signs and dreams?

Sometimes God speaks to us through other people, including fellow believers in Jesus. The Bible is full of examples of God speaking to one person through another person. One direct example in the Bible is when God sent the prophet Nathan to confront King David concerning his sin of adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, Uriah the Hittite (2 Samuel 12:1–15). Another example is how the Pharisee Gamaliel counseled the Jewish religious leaders to leave the apostles of Jesus alone in order to avoid opposing God Himself, which allowed for the possibility that their plan and activity was in fact of God (Acts 5:33–40). A third example is when the Lord sent Ananias to lay hands on Saul so he would regain his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 9:10–19). God is a God who speaks today, and He sometimes chooses to speak to people through other people.

God Speaks Through Signs and Dreams

Sometimes God speaks to His people through signs and dreams. The Bible contains many examples of God speaking to people in this way. God spoke in dreams to the patriarchs Jacob (Genesis 28:10–22) and Joseph (Genesis 37:6–11), to the prophet Daniel (Daniel 7), to Joseph—the husband of Mary—about the birth of Jesus (Matthew 1:18–21), and to many others.

Dreams are often mysterious and perplexing as well as difficult to interpret. God used dreams and their interpretation to communicate to Pharaoh (Genesis 41), Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 2), and Pontius Pilate’s wife (Matthew 27:19). God continues to speak to people today through signs and dreams, which require wisdom from God to understand.

What Is God Saying to You?

The question to ask is not: *Will* God speak to me? The proper question is this: *Am I listening* to God and obeying Him? Some of the ways He speaks to us are through His creation, through Scripture, through Jesus Christ, through His Holy Spirit, through other people, and through signs or dreams. God *is* speaking to His people about our priceless value, and He is calling us to be a light in the world. What is He saying *to you*? How does the Lord want you to respond to Him?

NOTES

Review Questions

1. How has God spoken to you and guided you throughout your life?
2. How can God use your story in the lives of other people?
3. What are some of the ways that God speaks to His people?
4. What is God saying to you about His heart for human life?

TRAINING HELPS

Challenge participants to pay attention to *how* God will be speaking to them during this training and to respond in obedience.

In a moment of silent prayer have participants ask God what He is saying to them about His heart for human life. Suggest that they wait and listen to His voice, writing down what He is speaking to them if that is helpful to them.

Conclude by asking one or two of them to pray. Then ask the three introductory questions again: Is God speaking? If God is speaking are you listening? If God is speaking and you are listening, what is He saying to you?

NOTES

NOTES

The Biblical Worldview

“He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”
Colossians 1:17

The Learner Will:

1. Understand how a person’s worldview guides his or her life.
2. Contrast the biblical worldview with other worldviews.
3. Recognize the various ways that people dispose of unwanted children, including the preborn.
4. Identify the ways in which a biblical worldview must be applied to preborn children.

Key Points

- Everyone has a worldview: a set of beliefs and values from which we view reality and make sense of the world.
- A person’s worldview is the basis for making decisions in life, including the decision to abort or to carry a child to term.
- Three major categories of worldview are the biblical worldview, spiritism, and secularism/atheism.
- Abortion is one of several ways—along with abandonment, exposure, and infanticide—by which unwanted children are disposed of.
- The Christian worldview affirms the value of all human life and the full personhood of the preborn child.

Scripture References

Colossians 1:17, Proverbs 14:12, Exodus 2:1–10, Genesis 2:7, Psalm 127:3–5, Job 10:8–12, Jeremiah 1:5, Matthew 1:18

TRAINING HELPS

Recommended time for this session: 90 minutes

Before providing participants with a definition of *worldview*, give them an opportunity to define it themselves.

TRAINING HELPS

Complete exercise 1 (see appendix at the end of this chapter).

A worldview is the framework from which we view reality and make sense of the world. We all have a worldview that deeply influences how we see things, how we think, how we behave, and how we live. One's worldview is the basis for understanding reality and for making daily decisions and is therefore extremely important.

Your worldview is like looking at the world through a pair of tinted sunglasses. Everything you see becomes shaded with the color of the lenses. If you put on a pair of red glasses, everything you see would be red. If you wore yellow glasses, everything would be yellow. And if you had lived your entire life wearing these yellow glasses, it would be difficult to imagine the world not-yellow! That's what your worldview does: it "colors" your view of the world according to the type of lenses that are in your "sunglasses."

What is critical for you to keep in mind is that every single person is wearing these worldview lenses—whether they know it or not. Your heritage, your family, your culture, and your belief system all shape your worldview. Your worldview, in turn, guides how you live your life. What is your position on homeless people within your community? *Your answer is guided by your worldview.* How do you think the elderly should be treated within your family unit? *Your answer is guided by your worldview.* Do you believe that children are born into sin, or do you believe that they are born inherently good and corrupted by the influence of the world? *Your answer is guided by your worldview.*

Remember that those tinted lenses are coloring everything you see, and by understanding that you *have* a worldview you can then at least consider what the world looks like through the lenses of another person's worldview. You can also adjust your own worldview: change it, adapt it, reinforce it, or maybe even put on a whole new one! That is, after all, what happens when we are adopted into the family of God: we replace our godless worldview with a Christ-centered one, in which the Bible—God's Word—becomes the new lenses through which we now see the world.

The Biblical Worldview and Why We Need It

A biblical worldview is a comprehensive view of the world from a perspective that is illuminated and guided by the Word of God. It affects every area of life, from money to morality, from politics to art. For Christians the Bible should influence every decision we make, every thought we have, and every value we embrace.

We need a biblical worldview because we need to see life and the world from God's perspective. If we perceive reality differently than God does—if we are wearing different lenses—we will not see things as they really are. "There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death" (Proverbs 14:12). A biblical worldview leads us to believe in moral absolutes, miracles, human dignity, and the possibility of redemption.

Remember, however, that even while we hold a biblical worldview, "we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face" (1 Corinthians 13:12a). Our view of the world will *never* be entirely clear during our lives on Earth. Not until we are in heaven will we see with complete clarity.

NOTES

Worldview Categories

The biblical worldview competes with several other worldviews that do not use the Bible as their foundation. Two primary categories of competing worldviews are *animism* and *secular humanism*. The errors of these worldviews become apparent when they are directly compared with the biblical worldview.

Animism (or pantheism, “all is God”) features the dominant belief that everything has a spirit or a soul—trees, rocks, animals, humans, sun, moon, sky, stars, and so on. The world is full of spirits, some evil and some good. These spirits must be appeased or bad things will happen to you. This viewpoint leads to the worship of spirits in the natural world, rather than to the worship of the one true God. People often live in fear of the spirits and try to gain power and control through offerings and sacrifices, charms, or magic.

Secularism/atheism is a way of life and thought that strongly opposes belief in God, religion, or anything supernatural, and instead exalts human beings as simply the highest evolution of nature so far (although man is still only purely physical matter like plants and other animals). According to this worldview, man is the ultimate authority on all matters, including when another’s life should end. Man has the right to do whatever he wishes because he has no one but himself to answer to.

A *biblical worldview* is the view of the world and life from the standpoint of the personal and supernatural God who reveals himself to us through the creation, the Bible, and Jesus Christ. For Christians God is the central focus of life, and the truth of Scripture is the basis for how we live. All of life for the Christian believer is a response of worship to God.

TRAINING HELPS

Complete exercise 2 (see appendix at the end of this chapter).

These opposing worldviews represent frequently incompatible perspectives on critical principles such as God, the world, human life, right and wrong, strength and weakness, and the treatment of unwanted children. Our worldview informs our answers to many important questions: *When does human life begin? How does human life begin? Who decides when human life begins and when it ends?* The Bible—and the worldview that it shapes—instructs us that God is integrally involved in all matters of human life, and it is *only God* who rightfully determines the beginning and end of each life. For those who do not adhere to this worldview, they often believe that they have the right to make the decision to end a life based on factors such as reputation, well-being, or cultural practices and values.

NOTES

The Disposal of Unwanted Babies

The response to a newly conceived child can vary widely depending on the parents' expectations and desires for that child: *I want a child. I don't want a child. I'm excited to be a parent. I can't afford to care for a child. I'm not married and my family will reject me if they find out. I've been waiting for a child for years. I'm too young to be a mother. I can't imagine bearing this child who will remind me of my rape.*

Fear caused by the conception of an unwanted child will often dominate the emotions of parents at this time. Fear can often drive pregnant women to take drastic action to rid themselves of the child. Fear can also motivate the fathers of these unwanted children (sometimes along with the extended families of the pregnant women) to pressure, coerce, or force pregnant women to dispose of these children, sometimes even against their own will. Because many worldviews devalue children, including preborn and newborn babies, these children are often at great risk because they are completely defenseless. There are four primary ways that people dispose of unwanted children.

1. **Abortion.** Anytime the life of a child is deliberately ended prior to being born, this act is called abortion. Some early forms of abortion are performed before the woman knows she is even pregnant. Some later forms of abortion are performed on preborn children who could live outside of the womb.
2. **Abandonment.** Sometimes when an unwanted baby is born, he or she is abandoned. Boxes, toilets, and trash bins are some of the places where unwanted babies have been found, sometimes living and sometimes dead. Sometimes mothers will abandon their children with the hope or expectation of rescue, such as when babies are left on the doorsteps of hospitals or orphanages. In the Old Testament, Moses was set adrift in a basket on the Nile River by his mother because all male Hebrew children had been ordered killed by Egypt's Pharaoh. Moses' mother expected that he would be killed if he remained with her, so she abandoned him (sending her older daughter, Miriam, to follow the floating basket) with the hope that he would be found and that he would survive (Exodus 2:1-10).
3. **Infanticide.** The killing of a newborn child, through active or passive means. This killing may take one of many forms, such as suffocation, drowning, or strangulation.
4. **Exposure.** Exposure is a form of child abandonment, and a passive form of infanticide, in which the baby is left exposed to the elements and usually expected to perish. Although an exposed baby may be rescued, exposure would be considered infanticide if the child dies.

NOTES

The outcomes of abortion, abandonment, infanticide, and exposure are the same: the unwanted child is gone. And while the preborn child and the newborn baby are equally innocent and defenseless, the killing of preborn children through abortion ends the life of human beings before they have even drawn their first breath. Mother Teresa said this about abortion: “If we can accept that a mother can kill even her own child, how can we tell other people not to kill one another?” In a world where it is becoming more and more acceptable for mothers to kill their children in the womb, human life at all stages will continue to be devalued and all people will be at risk.

Seeing Preborn Children From a Biblical Worldview

As we apply our Christian worldview to every aspect of our life, we will learn to see the preborn person from God’s perspective, which will affect how we think about abortion. There are four primary views of preborn children:

1. **The preborn child is not a person.** Therefore abortion is morally permissible at all times.
2. **The preborn child becomes a person** at some point in pregnancy. Therefore abortion is morally permissible only under certain circumstances, and until a particular point during gestation.
3. **Whether or not a preborn child is a person is irrelevant.** A woman has a right to determine if she will or won’t carry a pregnancy to term.
4. **The preborn child is fully human** from the first instant of fertilization and is made in the image of God. No abortion is ever permissible.

A biblical worldview supports the fourth view that affirms the humanity and full personhood of the preborn child. The Bible views the preborn person as a life that is a gift from God (Genesis 2:7; Psalm 127:3–5). Thus, we can speak of the personhood of the preborn child, which begins in the womb upon conception, or fertilization (Job 10:8–12; Jeremiah 1:5; Matthew 1:18).

NOTES

How Human Are the Preborn?

Preborn persons—wanted or unwanted—are created in the image and likeness of God. They are thought of by God and are created by God for a purpose. The preborn are fully human.

Author Stephen Schwarz in his book *The Moral Question of Abortion*¹ developed a test that shows four ways that the preborn child differs from a newly born child. This test demonstrates that these differences have no bearing on a person's dignity or worth, nor should they serve as a basis for deciding whether that person should live or die.

The four features of difference are:

Size—A preborn child is nearly always smaller than a newborn, but that doesn't mean that they have any less value. A full-grown man is much larger than a toddler, but that doesn't make him any more valuable as a person. Even within a particular culture that teaches that a grown man *is* more valuable than a toddler, it would not be acceptable to *kill* the toddler.

Level of development—A preborn child is less developed than a newborn. But so is the newborn less developed than a toddler. A toddler is less developed than an adolescent, and an adolescent is less developed than an adult. We should not kill the preborn child only because he or she is less developed than a newborn child. And we should not kill the newborn child because he or she is less developed than an older child.

Environment—The preborn is hidden in the womb, so some people think that because they cannot be seen, they are not fully human. But location has nothing at all to do with the value of the preborn as human beings. Where we live—whether geographical location (a particular nation or region) or relative location (in or out of the womb)—should not determine our worth.

Degree of dependence—The preborn is dependent on its mother for life, but our degree of dependence on certain people for our well-being may change through different stages of life. A disabled person may be dependent on others just to assist them in routine daily functions. The elderly are sometimes dependent on family members or other caretakers for support. The degree of dependence has nothing to do with the humanity of the preborn.

If we are going to think from the perspective of a biblical worldview, we must think of human life as valuable from conception until natural death. Humans anywhere along that range of life have the same value as other humans, and that value isn't affected by a person's size, level of development, environment, or degree of dependency.

NOTES

Conclusion

Abortion may very well be the greatest moral evil of our day. A biblical worldview allows us to see abortion for what it is: murder and an attack on God Himself. Women who have abortions, as well as physicians and others who perform abortions, are often deceived and morally blind to the sin they are committing against God. They deserve our compassionate prayer that their eyes will be opened. Through the grace of God and their trust in Christ they can recognize the value of every human life, including the life of the preborn child.

A biblical worldview is necessary if you intend to live according to God's moral will by the power of the Holy Spirit. Everybody *has* a worldview; not everybody's worldview is biblical. Even Christians can have values or beliefs in their view of life and the world that are not correct according to a right interpretation of Scripture. We need to adjust our viewpoint so it aligns with God's view of life and reality.

Review Questions

1. What is a specific example of a way in which your worldview differs from another person's worldview?
2. Which of the three major worldviews dominates the culture in which you live?
3. In what ways do people in your nation dispose of unwanted children?
4. How does a biblical worldview help us understand and respond to women who want to have an abortion?

NOTES

Appendix: The Biblical Worldview

Exercise 1 (5-10 minutes)

Note: Depending on time constraints, you can use one or both of the following two options.

Option One: (Sunglasses)

1. Come prepared with at least two pairs of colored sunglasses (you could also colored cellophane, plastic sheets, or any transparent colored item that you could look through).
2. Ask: “When you hear the word ‘worldview’ what comes to your mind? How would you describe ‘worldview’?” *Acknowledge responses but do not yet provide a definition of worldview.*
3. Put on a pair of the colored sunglasses (or look through the colored plastic). Ask “What will the room look like to me while I am wearing these sunglasses?”
4. Ask someone else to wear the other pair of colored sunglasses. Ask: “How will the room look to this person?”
5. Ask: “Explain to me *why* the two of us are seeing things differently.”
6. Ask: “How is looking at the room through colored sunglasses similar to the way we live out a worldview?” or “How is the contrast between the way we are seeing the *room* similar to the way a Christian and a non-Christian see the *world*?”

Option Two (Story)

1. Tell a story (preferably one from personal experience) that illustrates how two people can be looking at the exact same thing but see it differently. *See example below.*
2. Ask appropriate, open-ended questions to help establish the understanding of worldview, such as:
 - “Why did the people in my story see the same thing so differently?”
 - “What caused them to form such different perspectives?”
 - “How is it similar when I, as a Christian, see something so differently compared to someone who is not a Christian?”

Story Example:

A married couple was travelling through the U.S. state of Oregon, a region of lush green landscapes, tree-covered mountains, and beautiful blue lakes and rivers. As they drove the husband mentioned several times how vivid and colorful the landscape was, but his wife’s response was unenthusiastic: “Yeah, it’s nice, but it all seems kind of dry and dull.” He was confused by her response. After traveling for many hours, he finally realized that she was wearing brown-tinted sunglasses while his own sunglasses were blue, giving them totally different perspectives of the same scene.

Exercise 2 (20 minutes)

1. Using the included worldview chart templates (see below), prepare a *blank* large-format worldview chart (as well as a completed version of the chart, photocopied for distribution). Title the large-format chart *Opposing Worldviews*. Use whatever media is available to you: PowerPoint, text document, whiteboard, poster-sized paper, etc.
2. This chart should be empty of text except for the chart title. All other row and category headers should only be completed as you move through the exercise.
3. Ask: “How would you describe *your* worldview?” Allow listeners to answer from their Christian/biblical perspective as pastors and church leaders. Write “Biblical Worldview” in the *third* column. *See handout below.*
4. Ask: “What other major worldviews are present in your nation?” You can also ask about other major religions or the university/intellectual/scientific environment. Quickly narrow the discussion down to the two major categories of *animist* and *humanist*, and then write these two words in columns one and two. After they have responded, direct them to the definitions as stated under the section title “Worldview Categories” in the text of this chapter.
5. Once the three major worldviews are listed in the column headers, write “God” in the first row header of the chart. Ask: “According to the Bible, who is God?” Record listener responses. Continue across the chart, recording responses for the animistic and humanistic worldviews.
6. Once the first row is complete, say, “Our view of God will affect how we think about the world.” Write “The World” in the second row header, and then continue completing the chart as in step 5.
7. Complete the chart, using the following row headers. Example questions are given to help generate dialogue among participants:
 - Human Life (What is the origin of human life? When does life start? What is the value of human life compared to other parts of the creation?)
 - Right vs. Wrong (How does each worldview determine what is right and wrong?)
 - Strength vs. Weakness (What does the Bible teach us about the relationship between those who are strong and the weak (orphans, widows, etc.)? What is the perspective of the animist and humanist about those who are strong versus those who are weak?)
 - Abortion (If the biblical worldview teaches we are to protect the weak what is the biblical worldview of the preborn? Understanding the animistic and humanistic worldview of the strong and weak, how would they view abortion?)
8. Once the discussion has been completed you can pass out the completed handouts.

NOTES

¹ Stephen D. Schwarz, *The Moral Question of Abortion* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1990), 17ff.

[illegible]

Opposing Worldviews	Biblical Christian Worldview	Everything, including inanimate objects, has a spirit	There is no God and no spiritual realm
God Who or what is God?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has always existed. • Three persons in one God. • We can know God. • Creator. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many Gods. • Distant. • Many lesser gods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no god. • Science dictates all. • No way to know if there is a god. • “I am god.”
The World/Creation How was the world created? Who has control?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our source of understanding the world is based on the Bible. • There are seen and unseen aspects of the world. • The world was created by God. • Everything belongs to God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The world is inhabited by spirits. • Everything is filled with spiritual power. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What we know is only what we can see. • Created by a cosmic explosion. • All life on earth has evolved by chance.
Human Life Where did life come from? When does life start? What is the value of life compared to the rest of creation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created in the image of God. • Human life begins at conception, when sperm and egg join. • Humans have a spirit. • God loves, died for, and has a plan for every person from conception to death. • Human life is set apart from all creation. • Humans are to steward God’s creation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humans are physical and spiritual beings. • Human life begins at conception. • Many regard the fetus as a living spirit. • Life is lived one day at a time. • Fate: people accept things the way they are. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humans evolved by chance/accident. • Humans are only physical, no spirit. • Humans have the same value as plants and animals. • When human life begins is speculative. • A fetus is not a person and does not have value.
Right vs. Wrong How does each worldview determine what is right and what is wrong? Who decides what is right?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God has clearly defined the absolutes. • The Bible defines what is right and wrong. • It is God who decides what is right. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right and wrong is based on experience. • Right and wrong determined by how an act affects the group to which the person belongs. • Can be determined by how it might disrupt the spirits or gods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It’s relative, no absolute truth. • The situation or consequences of actions determine what is right or wrong. • Whoever is most powerful decides what is right.
The Strong vs. The Weak What is each worldview’s understanding of the relationship between the strong and the weak?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strong and weak have the same value to God. • The strong are commanded to help the weak. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strong dominate the weak. • Spirits can interfere with or help both the strong and the weak. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strongest survive. • The weak are dispensable. • Humans determine who has value and who does not.
Abortion How does the worldview of the strong and the weak determine how someone views abortion?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abortion is the deliberate ending of another human life (murder). • It is sin. • Abortion has negative consequences. • All sins, including abortion, are forgivable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abortion may be considered wrong but it’s acceptable if the group permits it. • If abortion is permitted family members may still be responsible to care for that spirit. • Abortion disrupts relationships in both the physical world and the spiritual world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abortion is reasonable and compassionate depending on the situation. • Abortion is a human right. • Humans can determine that a fetus does not have value and make the decision to end that life.

The Sacredness of Human Life

“So God created mankind in his own image; in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.”

Genesis 1:27

The Learner Will:

1. Learn what the Bible says about the value of human life.
2. Explain why human life is valuable.
3. Recognize that every human being—male or female—is of equal value in the eyes of God.
4. Identify the ways that abortion leads to further devaluation and diminishment of human life.
5. Understand the biblical response to abortion.

Key Points

- Mankind is unique among all creation because men and women are made in the image of God.
- All human life is of equal worth and immeasurable value from conception to natural death, because man is made in the image of God.
- The devaluation of human life has led to the death of hundreds of millions of people and caused untold damage around the globe.
- We must value human life as God does, and choose to be life-giving in our views of and responses to other people, including the preborn.

Scripture References

Genesis 1:26–27, Genesis 2:7, Psalm 100:3, Psalm 139:13–16a, Jeremiah 1:4–5, Genesis 1:27, Genesis 1:31a, Exodus 20:13, Proverbs 6:17, Psalm 139:13–14, Psalm 139:15–16, Jeremiah 1:5, Genesis 1:27, John 10:10, Proverbs 24:11, Matthew 25:40, Proverbs 31:8–9, Psalm 68:5, Jeremiah 9:24, James 2:14–17, 2 Corinthians 5:18–19

TRAINING HELPS

Recommended time for this session: 60-90 minutes

Begin with these questions: “What does the word ‘sacred’ mean? When you hear the word, what comes to mind?”

Consider opening this session with a dramatic re-telling of the story of God’s creation from Genesis 1. Ask participants how God created light, and wait for their response of “He spoke and it appeared,” or a similar response. Ask the same about the stars, plants, and animals and finally man. Wait for their response after each one. Emphasize how God formed man out of the dust of the earth. This was different from every other part of his creation. From the beginning, man and woman were “set apart” from all other parts of creation; they were “sacred,” having been given life by the very Spirit of God breathed into them.

The Bible teaches that when God created man, He created him in the image and likeness of God: “So God created mankind in his own image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:26–27). The foundational principle of this truth is also the moral and practical foundation for the protection and defense of human life at all ages and stages. **All human life is of equal worth and immeasurable value, from conception to natural death, because man is made in the image of God.**

“Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being” (Genesis 2:7). Man is unique because God breathed life directly into him—*this is not true of any other living creation*. Man is also set apart from animals due to our spiritual comprehension and because we have a conscience, both of which come directly from God.

Men and women are intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual beings that will never cease to exist; all of these attributes are reflections of characteristics possessed by God. God’s image is also reflected in every virtuous character trait we possess: love, faithfulness, justice, righteousness, patience, kindness, humility, forgiveness, mercy, and grace.

The Bible speaks clearly about God’s sovereignty over all of His creation, but 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 extends to every member of the human race.) God has made each of us with a purpose (Psalm 100:3, Psalm 139:13–16a), and He has a plan for our lives that begins at conception—the first moment of our existence (Jeremiah 1:4–5).

What Does the Bible Say about the Value of Human Life?

TRAINING HELPS

Complete exercise 1 (see appendix at the end of this chapter).

Human life is valuable because God created mankind in His image.

“God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27). This biblical truth establishes the immeasurable value of every human life. Our value is not arbitrary, like coins and currency. Our value is not rooted in scarcity, like silver and gold. Our value is based on the One in Whose image we are made.

Human life is valuable because God declared mankind to be very good.

“God saw all that he had made, and it was very good” (Genesis 1:31a). This all-encompassing declaration of the goodness of God’s creation included the making of man.

Human life is valuable because God prohibits and detests the taking of human life.

The Sixth Commandment simply says, “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13). Proverbs 6:17 says that the Lord hates “hands that shed innocent blood.”

NOTES

Human life is valuable because God creates every life.

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well” (Psalm 139:13–14).

Human life is valuable because God knew us from before we were born, was intentional about our creation, and has a purpose for our lives.

“My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be” (Psalm 139:15-16). “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations” (Jeremiah 1:5).

Every Human Being Is Equally Valuable

Our value to God remains the same no matter what differences there are among us in sex, age, skin color, ethnic background, caste or tribe, religion, language, nationality, level of intelligence, social status and class, or other factors. Every human life is made in the image of God and therefore must be respected, treated with dignity, protected, preserved, nurtured, and developed—not disrespected, disregarded, devalued, cast aside, diminished, discarded, or killed.

Every human life is valuable from the moment of conception, and our value extends throughout our entire lifetime. An act of violence against the infirm, the weak, the handicapped, or the elderly is just as much an affront to God as an act of violence against the child in the womb.

“God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27). Men and women both bear God’s image, so men and women are equal in dignity and worth. One is image of God *male*, the other is image of God *female*. Although men and women have different roles in the family, different levels of physical strength, and different ways of thinking and feeling about many things, *they are both image-bearers of God, and therefore of equivalent value.*

Treating women as though they are somehow less valuable than men is a great problem in many countries. To treat a woman in any way as if she has less value than a man is disrespecting a person made in the image of God. Christian men, especially in nations where men have most of the power and authority, should lead the way in demonstrating the proper treatment of women by treating their spouses and all other women as equals—that is, in a godly, respectful manner.

NOTES

Abortion: World History's Greatest Genocide

In John 10:10, Jesus said, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.” This is the spiritual truth behind the many ways that human beings are devalued in the world: through slavery, subjugation, abuse, assault, and murder, which remains the ultimate offense against human life. Hundreds of thousands of people are murdered individually around the world every year. The world has also seen an even more catastrophic loss of human life throughout the last century (and throughout all of human history) as a result of genocide: the systematic eradication of large groups, sometimes millions, of people.

TRAINING HELPS

Complete exercise 2 (see appendix at the end of this chapter).

- Rwanda genocide (1994): 1,174,000 Tutsi and Hutu people
- Cambodia genocide (1975–1979): 2,000,000 Khmer people
- The Holocaust/Shoah (1933–1945): 13,000,000 Europeans, including 6,000,000 Jews
- The Stalin regime (1941–1953): 20,000,000 Soviets

We have seen that when human life is not properly valued, political leaders, people groups, and entire societies have engaged in deeply destructive behaviors. But what remains mostly unseen is another genocide that annually kills more people than all of the previous examples combined. *Abortion ends the life of more than 42 million people around the world every year.*

Just as the world often turns its back on the atrocities that are committed in neighboring nations, we have collectively turned away from the brutality of abortion and its effects within our families, communities, and nations. If it is true that all human life is equally valuable in the eyes of God, then those who profess faith in Jesus Christ *must not look away* from the great evil of abortion. But not only must we *see*, we must *act* on behalf of those who cannot defend themselves. “Rescue those being led away to death,” says Proverbs 24:11.

NOTES

Abortion Is the Tip of the Spear

“Tip of the spear” is a phrase sometimes used to describe circumstances where a particular action makes way for other, often more extreme, actions. The sharp tip of a hunter’s spear will pierce its prey before the wedge-shaped body of the spearhead causes further, more extensive damage to the animal. Striking an animal with the flat side of a spear will cause little damage; it is the tip that always leads the injury.

Abortion is the “tip of the spear” in regards to the devaluation of human life. Just as a spear pierces an animal’s hide and damages its internal organs, abortion “pierces” the protections upon human life and makes way for life to be threatened in other ways. Because it occurs before a person is born, abortion will always be the earliest point that a human life can be threatened. But there are many ways in which human life can be devalued and diminished throughout its advancing ages:

- Infancy: Infanticide, exposure, abandonment
- Childhood: Sexual abuse, human trafficking
- Adolescence: Slavery, assault
- Adulthood: Prostitution, rape
- Old Age: Abandonment, euthanasia

All of these offenses against human life have their roots in the devaluation of human life that occurs when a preborn child is killed during abortion. If we adopt a worldview that acknowledges the value of the preborn human being, it is likely that we will understand better the value of *born* human beings. If our worldview then leads us to action in defense of the preborn child, our protections for born infants (along with children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly) will naturally follow.

This is not, however, necessarily true in reverse. Even if we acknowledge the God-given value of a five-year-old child, we could still underestimate the value of a five-month-old fetus. Even if we believe that God loves a woman (even as much as he loves a man), we could still overlook the reality that He loves a *preborn girl* just as much. Even if we realize that God cares intensely for the elderly widow (who is dependent on others for her care), we could still neglect the fact that He cares as deeply for the *equally dependent* preborn child.

NOTES

We live in a world where many populations are subject to alienation and risk: orphans, disabled people, widows, strangers. If God values all human life equally from the moment of conception, then protection of human life must begin with the protection of those not yet born. And if we agree with God that *even* the preborn child is of priceless value, then our protection of other vulnerable people groups will logically follow. If the preborn child is valuable, the orphan is valuable. If the preborn child is valuable, then the disabled person is valuable. If the preborn child is valuable, then the widow is valuable. If the preborn child is valuable, then the stranger is valuable.

Each of these vulnerable people groups, along with many others, is worthy of protection. The Bible says much about the sick, the hungry, the prisoner—and we must consider the ways to do all that can be done for “the least of these” (Matthew 25:40). But because every human life begins at conception—we are all “preborn” before we are “born”—the womb must always be the point of life at which protection should begin.

The Biblical Response to Abortion

Because God’s perspective regarding the preborn—that they are precious, valuable, and human—is not held worldwide, the lives of millions of children are ended before they’ve had a chance to experience God’s plans for their lives. Furthermore, the lives of millions of women and men—as well as all of those in relationship with them—are impacted negatively by these abortions. As followers of Christ, we are required to act for many reasons.

1. God calls us to be defenders of the defenseless.

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.

Proverbs 31:8–9

There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a person who stirs up conflict in the community.

Proverbs 6:16–19

God Himself is a defender of the widow and a father to the fatherless (Psalm 68:5). He exercises kindness, justice, and righteousness on earth (Jeremiah 9:24), and He designed us, His image-bearers, to do the same. God expects His people to defend and care for those in need and those without a voice, including the most innocent people: those not yet born.

NOTES

2. *God tells us that faith without works is dead.*

What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, “Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

James 2:14–17

Since God is sovereign, no life is an accident. Since human life is sacred, every child is precious in His sight. We believe this, and so we must act, for the Bible tells us that faith without works is dead.

3. *God gives us the ministry of reconciliation.*

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:18–19

Our relationship with God was made right through the atoning power of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We now have the opportunity to share His Gospel—including the truth that God values every human life—with others, including those who are facing, or those who have already made, an abortion decision. God continues to reconcile people to Himself through Jesus Christ, and He has chosen us as the messengers of that reconciliation!

NOTES

Conclusion

Most societies have become complacent about the loss of human life through abortion, and the devastation on our world due to the killing of innocent preborn children has become virtually immeasurable: 42 million lives lost every year, countless more lives shattered, populations diminished, and societies undermined. When we don't acknowledge the incomparable value of human life, and revere its Creator, we are at risk of treating others—including the preborn—without the dignity and respect that they deserve as image-bearers of God.

The moral decay of our world is increasing, and offenses against our fellow man are growing in scale and in boldness. We are engaged in activities that were inconceivable mere generations ago, and we will no doubt soon encounter previously unthinkable evils until, and unless, a biblical theology of life is adopted by individuals, families, communities, societies, and nations.

Review Questions

1. Why is all human life of equal worth and immeasurable value?
2. How does Scripture support the defense of all human life, including life in the womb?
3. What are some of the ways that human life is devalued in your community or nation?
4. What is one tangible way that you can defend preborn children?

NOTES

Appendix: The Sacredness of Human Life

Exercise 1 (20 minutes)

1. Have participants form five small groups
2. Cut Handout 2.1 along the designated lines and give each small group one of the strips of paper
3. Ask the groups to take **two minutes** to read their verse(s) together, discuss the question, and be prepared to share their verse(s) and response with the entire group.
4. After about **five minutes**, call participants back to attention.
5. In order of group number (listed on each section), have small groups read their verse(s) aloud then share their responses with the large group.
6. The facilitator can emphasize and restate as needed.
7. After the last small group has shared their response to the final verse (Jeremiah 1:5), ask this new question: “***When*** does God begin to value human life?” Emphasize the biblical truth that God finds value in each one of his creations ***before*** we are even conceived!

Exercise 2 (10 minutes)

1. Use a large *metal* receptacle (such as a cooking pot, can, bucket, or bowl) and approximately 5,000 small ball bearings (or small marbles, tiny stones, or dried beans*). Separate them into five cups, one each of the following quantities:
 - a. **12** (1,174,000 lives: Rwanda genocide)
 - b. **20** (2,000,000 lives: Cambodia genocide)
 - c. **130** (13,000,000 lives: the Holocaust/Shoah)
 - d. **200** (20,000,000 lives: Stalin regime)
 - e. **4,200** (420,000,000 lives: abortions worldwide during the past 10 years)
2. The ball bearings and receptacle should be hidden out of sight in order to minimize distraction.
3. Say: "I am going to briefly illustrate how great the problem of abortion is when compared to other horrific attacks against those created in God's image."
4. Ask participants to close their eyes and listen.
5. Say: "The sound of each BB dropping into this bowl [or can, etc.] represents 100,000 lives lost." Drop one BB into the bowl.
6. Say: "These are the lives lost during the genocide in the African nation of Rwandan in 1994." Pour 12 BBs into the bowl.
7. Say: "These are the lives lost during the genocide in the Asian nation of Cambodian in the 1970s." Pour 20 BBs into the bowl.
8. Say: "These are the lives lost during the Holocaust under Germany's Hitler." Pour 130 BBs into the bowl.
9. Say: "These are the lives lost in the Soviet Union under Stalin" Pour 200 BBs into the bowl.
10. Say: "These are the lives lost to abortion over the past ten years." Pour 4,200 BBs into the bowl.
11. After a pause, lead a prayer asking God's forgiveness for the sin of abortion.
12. At the conclusion of the prayer, share that abortion ends the life of more than 42 million people around the world every year. We must "rescue those being led away to death" (Proverbs 24:11).

* It may not be practical to collect 5,000 marbles or dried beans. Instead you could use 500 dried beans or ball bearings with two metal cans to pour the beans from one can to the other. You would pour one can out into the other can nine times to equal the sound of 4,500 beans pouring out. Keep in mind that the most audible sound will come from metal objects being poured into a metal receptacle.

Handout 2.1

Instructions: Prior to the session, cut this handout into strips along the lines. Distribute one strip to each group, according to the provided group numbers.

Group 1

Read aloud Genesis 1:27.

According to this verse, why is human life sacred?

Group 2

Read aloud Genesis 1:31.

According to this verse, why is human life sacred?

Group 3

Read aloud Exodus 20:13 and Proverbs 6:17.

According to these verses, why is human life sacred?

Group 4

Read aloud Psalm 139:13-14.

According to this verse, why is human life sacred?

Group 5

Read aloud Psalm 139:15-16 and Jeremiah 1:5.

According to these verses, why is human life sacred?

NOTES

Becoming a Life-Giver

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy;
I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”
John 10:10

The Learner Will:

1. Recognize the difference between “life-taking” behavior and “life-giving” behavior.
2. Identify the ways in which people can be life-givers.

Key Points

- Jesus Christ came to bring abundant life to the world, and it is His example that His disciples must follow.
- Being a life-giver is most importantly a *lifestyle*—how we live from day to day.
- Christ’s redemption of an individual’s heart enables that person to reflect *His heart* toward other people.
- Redeemed people reflect the heart of Christ toward others through redemptive thinking, redemptive hearing, redemptive seeing, redemptive words, and redemptive actions.

Scripture References

John 10:10, James 3:9–10, John 8:29, 1 Corinthians 2:16, Romans 12:2, John 15:4, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, James 1:19, John 8:47, Matthew 18:9, 1 Timothy 6:11, Proverbs 18:21, Colossians 4:5–6, Proverbs 4:20–27

TRAINING HELPS

Recommended time for this session: 60 minutes

Direct participants to draw a line across their paper as you draw one on the board.

The biblical worldview is premised on the truth that *all* human life (including preborn life) is sacred and highly valuable. Jesus came to bring abundant life, and we have been called to share that life with others. We must therefore live every moment in a manner that is life-giving to everyone in our lives, and we must seek to glorify God in every thought, word, and action.

What Does It Mean to Be Life-Giving?

The best example of what it means to be *life-giving* is the life Jesus lived. The greatest life-giving act in history occurred when God sent His Son to die on the cross for our sins. That single act of redemption for mankind was the most profound and effective life-giving activity in the history of mankind. That is the character we must reflect to women, men, and children—born and preborn, wanted or unwanted, intended or unintended, loved or unloved—at every stage and every age of life. How we think, hear, speak, see, and act reveals our love for others, and demonstrates the extent to which our way of living has become redemptive in nature.

TRAINING HELPS

Place an X on the line near the beginning and date it with the year you became a Christian. Communicate with the participants that their journey as a life-giver began the moment they placed trust in Jesus Christ. Jesus modeled how to be a life-giver, and the moment they trusted in Him they began their journey as a life-giver.

Sometimes babies are born with defects that may or may not be correctable with surgery or other medical care. Some individuals can't walk, and they need crutches or a wheelchair. Someone you know might be mentally impaired or emotionally challenged and cannot handle stress and anxiety very well. Maybe the color of your skin or your being part of a certain people group causes you not to be valued by other people the way God values you. Being a life-giver means we should treat all people with the dignity and respect due to them as people who bear the image of God, even those with disabilities and/or problems.

Because of God's great life-giving actions toward us, we are directed to be life-giving toward others. Being a life-giver is more than just a theological issue to be discussed and preached about; it must be a *lifestyle*, how we live from day to day. But the call to give life in every part of our lives can sometimes illuminate the inconsistencies that each of us struggles with. Our words and our actions should not be in contradiction.

With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.

James 3:9–10

NOTES

How can we offer Christ's love to strangers if we're withholding it from family members? Why would the world consider adopting our way of life if we are "killing" other Christians with words of slander? How can we deliver a life-giving message to a woman facing an unexpected pregnancy while at the same time expressing a *life-taking* message through anger or hateful words toward those who oppose us?

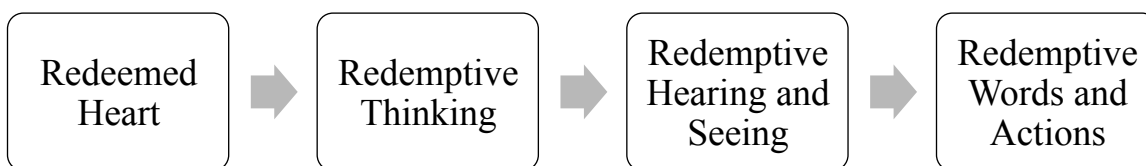
Do you value human life like God does? By treating properly every person we meet, we are helping that person understand God's love and grace, rather than offering shame, retribution, and wrath. By God's grace and power it is your job to be life-giving to all whom the Lord brings into your life, regardless of the sin in which they may be—or have been—involved. By being a life-giver you have the best opportunity to introduce that person to Jesus Christ and to the forgiveness and healing offered by God through His Son.

A Redeemed Heart

Receiving the Lord's abundant grace and mercy in our lives through God's work on the cross compels us to treat the people around us in the same manner. A redeemed heart knows and understands the depth of its sin and the completeness of God's forgiveness. When the human heart is redeemed by Christ, it undergoes a process that sets a foundation for our thoughts, ears, eyes, mouths, and hands to become life-giving like Christ.

TRAINING HELPS

Place an X near the end of your line and direct participants do the same. Participants should understand that their destination is redeemed heart, mind, ears, and eyes.



Christ's redemption of an individual's heart enables that person to reflect His heart toward other people. The primary relationship in which we begin to understand Christ's heart of compassion for other people is His relationship to God the Father. *This* is the relationship that we must seek to emulate, by allowing the Holy Spirit to develop within us the same heart for the Father that Christ had.

Scripture clearly reveals the desire that Jesus had for pleasing His Father in heaven. In John 8:29, Jesus expresses his focus on pleasing his Father with everything he does: "The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him." As we grow in our desire to please the Father, we learn more about him, and our understanding of God is deepened. The more we understand God, the more we understand others and ourselves.

NOTES

Redemptive Thinking

Redemptive thinking is birthed from a redeemed heart. Both our heart and our mind must be transformed into the likeness of Christ if we are truly to become life-giving people. How you *think* about other people establishes the base from which all of your other actions take place. Do you have love for those who speak poorly of you? Are you concerned for the eternal life of a person more than you are concerned about getting your way? Do you seek understanding before you make a judgment about a person who seems very different than yourself? Each of us needs to be thinking redemptively about every person we interact with each day.

The Bible clearly informs us that we can develop the mind of Christ in our lives. The Bible asks, “Who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:16). We can be equipped to understand spiritual truth and wisdom in the same way that Christ knows them. Another powerful verse on this subject is found in Romans 12:2: “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Our thinking will be redeemed and we will grow in our understanding of God’s will by spending time with Him every day—reading His Word, praying, talking with Him. The more time we spend with the Lord, the more our minds will be transformed into his likeness. We must therefore abide in Christ (John 15:4) and pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17) in order to transform our minds.

TRAINING HELPS

Participants can turn to the person next to them and discuss different ways to be life-giving in their thinking. Volunteers can then share some suggestions with the large group.

NOTES

Redemptive Hearing

The Bible tells us that we should be quick to hear and slow to speak (James 1:19)—this is the foundation of *redemptive hearing*. Redemptive hearing is also making the choice *not* to listen to any unwholesome talk, no matter who is speaking. This can be awkward at times, but necessary if you are to become like Christ. Walking away from conversations that do not reflect Christ can be liberating and powerful, not only for yourself but also for those who are watching. We need to be gatekeepers in what we allow to enter our minds through what we hear.

If we listen long enough to other voices (like the voice of Satan and of sin) more than we listen to God's voice, we will be at risk of becoming incapable of hearing His voice. John 8:47 says, "He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is because you do not belong to God." This is a powerful statement made by Jesus to religious leaders who thought they knew God but in reality were far from him. They were spending time in their corrupt religious practices while their contact with the heavenly Father had been long absent. The more we spend time with the Lord the more we will be able to discern and know with certainty His voice. Our ears will be trained to be alert and ready to hear His voice above all others. In order to be a life-giver to others, we must be able to hear the voice of the Father, the Creator of life, the One who fills us with life.

TRAINING HELPS

Participants can turn to the person next to them and discuss different ways to be life-giving in their hearing. Volunteers can then share some suggestions with the large group.

NOTES

Redemptive Seeing

And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.

Matthew 18:9

This is an urgent call to take radical action! In our world it is so easy to see unholy things. The world has become consumed with the perfect physique and using bodies to sell products, promote movies, and capture our minds and hearts with things not of the Lord. Men and women must all be disciplined in what they see, what they read, and what they watch on TV or in the movies.

Whenever we allow any unholy image to enter our mind through our eyes, it affects our relationship with the heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus. And as we allow this kind of material to enter our minds through our eyes, we are affected emotionally, psychologically, relationally, and spiritually. We can become *life-taking* in our thoughts, our speech, and our actions toward others. Our response to unholy images must, however, be more than just closing our eyes. We must flee from impure images, along with all other forms of sin, and pursue righteousness (1 Timothy 6:11). This is the active foundation of redemptive seeing.

Redemptive seeing is needed between husbands and wives, parents and children, friends and loved ones, and even among strangers. People—especially our spouses, children, and loved ones—can sense our hearts for them by the way we look at them. They can sense through our gaze whether we are approving of them, affirming them, enjoying them, and blessing them...and they can also sense the opposite. Our sight can be redeemed as we spend time alone with the Lord, and He gives us His eyes.

TRAINING HELPS

Participants can turn to the person next to them and discuss different ways to be life-giving in their seeing. Volunteers can then share some suggestions with the large group.

NOTES

Redemptive Words

The tongue has the power of life and death...

Proverbs 18:21

Another way that others can clearly tell where we are spending our time is through our speech. A redemptive, life-giving character—which is the character of Christ—flows from the heart to the mind, then out through our words. Scripture declares that the tongue is powerful and is able to deliver life or death. Every time you open your mouth to speak to another person, then, you must choose to *give* life or *take* life with your speech. When we choose words that encourage, affirm, exhort—or even lovingly rebuke—we are *giving* life to other people. When we choose words that tear people down or elevate us above others, we are withholding or *taking* life from them. Apart from your actions, being life-giving with your words is one of the most powerful ways the world will know Jesus.

Colossians 4:5–6 gives us additional guidelines on how to speak redemptively to others around us: “Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.” *Grace* and *salt* need to be part of how we speak to others. This requires being prepared ahead of time, anticipating the kinds of conversations that we may encounter in the work and ministry that we do every day. Wisdom is available through spending time with Christ and requesting it from Him. Making “the most of every opportunity” requires that we plan and listen intently to the prompting and leading of the Holy Spirit. In this way we can continue to grow as life-givers as we speak to those that the Lord places before us each day.

TRAINING HELPS

Participants can turn to the person next to them and discuss different ways to be life-giving with their words. Volunteers can then share some suggestions with the large group.

NOTES

Redemptive Actions

Finally, we need to consider taking action as a life-giver. Redemptive actions are a direct reflection of how we have been treated by God. If our Gospel is not touching others, we ourselves have not been touched by the Gospel. But, on the other hand, if we have been touched by the Gospel, we will be telling as many people as we possibly can about Jesus every day, and taking action to demonstrate His love!

We are created to worship God and bring glory to Him continually. This is life-giving to God and life-giving to others, and it is the most life-giving thing we can experience ourselves. In living this way we are fulfilling God's design for our lives. As you work on bringing every aspect of your life into submission to Christ, allowing His redemptive work to impact each area of your life, your actions will respond accordingly. Life-giving action by God's people is what the world is desperate for.

Conclusion

My son, pay attention to what I say; turn your ear to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to one's whole body. Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. Keep your mouth free of perversity; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you. Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways. Do not turn to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.

Proverbs 4:20–27

TRAINING HELPS

Direct participants to consider these questions: Is God speaking? Are you listening? If He is speaking and you are listening, what is he saying to you? Where are you at right now in your journey? What areas in your life are in need of complete redemption in order for you to become a greater life-giver? Allow time for participants to contemplate, pray, and ask God what areas need attention. Then direct them into pairs to pray, encouraging one another and asking for the Holy Spirit's help in becoming greater life-givers.

The time is long overdue for the people of God to act unselfishly and sacrificially with redemptive intent. God's people can change the world for His glory if we decide to do that! Jesus Christ came to bring abundant life, and if we accept the life He offers us, our hearts will be redeemed. From a redeemed heart comes the mind of Christ, and He will guide us into life-giving interaction with others. As we choose what is right, the Lord will raise up an army of life-givers who can bring life to their families, their neighbors, their communities, and their nations.

NOTES

Review Questions

1. What does it mean to be life-giving?
2. When a person's heart is redeemed by Christ, what is the effect on his or her outward life?
3. What are we at risk for if we listen too much to voices other than God's voice?
4. What does Colossians 4:5–6 have to say about being a redemptive speaker?

NOTES

NOTES

Spiritual Foundations of Ministry

“But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this
all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.”

2 Corinthians 4:7

The Learner Will:

1. Describe the foundations of building intimacy with the Lord.
2. Explain how the relationship between the six spiritual foundations and the sacredness of human life.
3. Explain how the biblical story of Daniel is a strong example of how intimacy with God leads to increased impact in ministry.

Key Points

- Intimacy with the Lord transforms our lives and leads to effective impact in ministry.
- We must allow God to prepare our hearts for ministry.
- Meditating on and studying God’s Word serves as the primary foundation of all ministry.
- We were made to worship God, and worship brings us closer to God.
- God longs for us to communicate with Him through prayer.
- Spiritual warfare equips us to better understand God, our enemy, and ourselves.
- Evangelism represents an acknowledgment that only God can meet a person’s deepest needs.

TRAINING HELPS

Recommended time for this session: 4 Hours

Scripture References: Prepare Your Heart

Ephesians 5:25–26, 1 John 1:9, Psalm 139:23, Deuteronomy 6:5, Philippians 2:6–8, Psalm 66:17–18, Matthew 6:14–15, Ephesians 4:11–13, 2 Corinthians 9:12, Luke 16:9, Philippians 1:21–26, 1 Corinthians 6:20, 1 Samuel 15:22–23, John 14:21

Scripture References: Build on God's Word

Hebrew 4:11–13, Proverbs 2:1–5, 1 Peter 1:23, Romans 10:17, Matthew 4:3–4, Romans 15:4, Psalm 119:18, Psalm 119:105, Ephesians 6:17

Scripture References: Begin with Worship

2 Chronicles 20, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Romans 12:1, Psalm 89:1–2, 1 Peter 2:9, John 15:4–5, Hebrews 12:2–3, Colossians 2:6–7

Scripture References: Depend on Prayer

Psalm 25:4–5, 1 Samuel 2:1–10, Exodus 33:13, Ephesians 1:3–14, James 1:5–8, Matthew 5:44, Ecclesiastes 4:12b, Hebrews 3:7–8a, Ephesians 3:20

Scripture References: Engage in Spiritual Warfare

1 Peter 5:8, Zechariah 4:8, John 10:10, Ephesians 6:12, Colossians 2:15, Revelation 20:10, Genesis 3:1, Romans 8:37, 1 John 5:4–5, Galatians 2:20, 1 Corinthians 1:30, Luke 9:1–2, Joshua 1:5, 9, Romans 8:38–39

Scripture References: Live out the Gospel

John 10:10, Luke 4:43, Matthew 10:42, John 6:51, Romans 2:4

TRAINING HELPS

Complete exercise 1 (see appendix at the end of this chapter).

As image-bearers and followers of Christ we reflect His character. Many of Jesus' encounters with others show Him responding to their needs—their physical needs, their personal and emotional needs, and their spiritual needs. We should seek to imitate Jesus by being sensitive to the needs of other people, and by *doing something* in response. If someone is hungry, we should feed them. If someone is thirsty, we should provide water.

Another attribute of Jesus that we must reflect is His close relationship with God the Father. In His earthly life, Jesus had uninterrupted communion and communication with His Father, and He retains that relationship now at His Father's side. If we truly wish to impact the lives of others, especially when it comes to dealing with issues of life and death, we must do so out of a place where we are reflecting the Father's heart and Jesus' closeness to Him. When we seek God and abide in Christ, we experience His love and we are transformed. Our thinking changes, our attitude changes, and how we view the world changes. The more we are able to receive the love of God, the more ready and prepared we will be to communicate that love to others around us.

Daniel: A Biblical Example of God's Sustaining Power

Daniel spent much of each day on his knees, praying to God at least three times each day. He made his time with God a high priority. He had been given authority by the king of Babylon—King Darius—to oversee the entire kingdom, so even in the midst of what must have been a very demanding schedule, he always found time to pray.

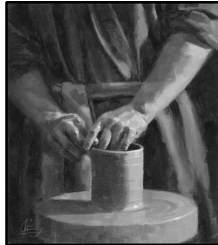
King Darius' advisors manipulated the king into mandating worship of himself—a mandate the advisors knew that Daniel would never obey. Because of Daniel's allegiance to God, he refused to bow his knee to the king, and was cast into a den of lions to be destroyed, but the lions would not harm him—Daniel had become completely dependent on the Lord for His sustaining power. Daniel surrendered his life to God and God protected him in the face of certain death. The next day, King Darius ordered the lions' den to be opened, and—to his great joy—found Daniel alive and unharmed. The king placed Daniel in charge of the entire land and was given authority over all other authorities.

Where had Daniel's wisdom come from? Where had his faith come from? From where did it all originate? It came from those three times every single day—day in and day out—that Daniel spent time with God. He developed such a close relationship with God that even the lions did not harm him. As a result of this closeness Daniel was given authority over the land. We see in Daniel's example the impact we can have in the world when we first spend time with God.

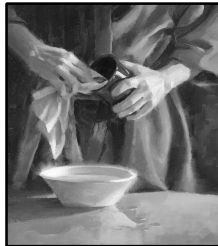
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Intimacy Before Impact

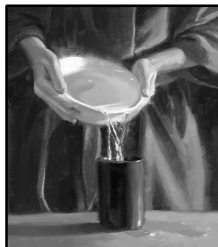
A heart prepared for ministry is one that is wholly devoted, humble, repentant, forgiving, generous, and obedient. "...Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word" (Ephesians 5:25–26). In order to join God in His work we must be willing to first be made clean and allow Him to prepare our hearts.



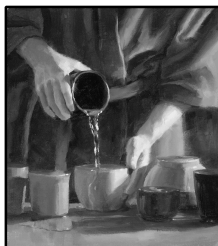
Just as a clay vessel is carefully shaped and distinctively crafted, each of us is unique and hand-formed by God the Father, made in His image.



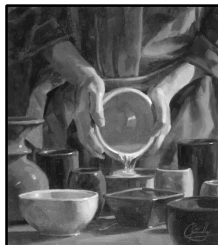
The Lord identifies areas of our lives that need to be cleansed, and He is there to help clean and purify those areas. This is an ongoing process: we're always called to *go back* to this intimate place with Christ, so He can reveal to us the things we need to be working on.



Once the cup has been made clean, the Master can fill it with something good to drink. He empowers us and gives us all that we need to complete the work that He has set before us.



God often gives us the wonderful opportunity to pour into others: to minister to their needs, care for them, bring the Living Water to them.



Something marvelous then happens after we pour into others: *they begin pouring into those around them*. God's ministry is multiplied through His church as we are faithful to share His life with others.

The Six Spiritual Foundations of Ministry

Every follower of Jesus Christ needs to intentionally spend time with God before providing care and counsel to others. The wisdom of this approach is evident in the results it produces. When we seek closeness with God first, we are changed, and God can more effectively work through us within the lives of others. After all, other people don't need *us*; they need *God*. So while others may *find* God through you or me, only God can truly help them. Walking in fellowship with God will cause us to speak words of counsel and concern with confidence, for it is through our own experience of God's faithfulness that we can speak His truth into another person's life.

There are six key spiritual disciplines of the Christian faith that form the foundation of any ministry, including ministry to those whose lives have been wounded by abortion and the devaluation of human life.

1. Prepare Your Heart
2. Build on God's Word
3. Begin with Worship
4. Depend on Prayer
5. Engage in Spiritual Warfare
6. Live Out the Gospel

When any follower of Christ practices these disciplines, their spiritual vitality and faith in God are developed and nurtured. For those that are in ministry leadership roles, these spiritual foundations are essential in maintaining a Christ-centered focus, which is necessary for effective ministry.

TRAINING HELPS

Complete exercise 2 (see appendix at the end of this chapter).

Foundation 1: Prepare Your Heart

The journey to becoming a life-giver begins with our hearts. Our communion with the Father and impact in ministry is dependent upon continually inviting the Holy Spirit to examine our hearts and show us where we need the Father's forgiveness and restoration.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9

Our effectiveness will be hindered if our hearts are full of bitterness, rebellion and sin. Like David, when we cry out to God to search our hearts, He works in us to transform our hearts to reflect more of His character.

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.

Psalms 139:23

NOTES

From a Divided Heart to a Devoted Heart

Whenever we allow secondary loyalties to compete with life's ultimate allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ, the counsel we offer to others will be diminished, as will our personal growth in faith. If we are to be victorious Christians and effective ministers, we must discern and remove idols that keep us from serving God alone. God tells us to resist this sinful human tendency with the great commandment: "Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" (Deuteronomy 6:5).

From a Prideful Heart to a Humble Heart

Humility is God's way. It is neither self-debasement nor self-hatred. Instead, it is three things simultaneously:

1. Delighting in who God is
2. Delighting in who we are
3. Being willing to set aside our rights for the sake of others.

Jesus' example of humility is the strongest model we have. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Philippians 2:5–8

From an Unrepentant Heart to a Repentant Heart

When we ignore sin in our lives or think that casual or habitual sin is permissible, we build a barrier between ourselves and God. The only way to tear down that barrier is to repent. The psalmist understood how sin interrupts our fellowship with God: "I cried out to him with my mouth; his praise was on my tongue. If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened" (Psalm 66:17–18). God cannot be part of sin. Nor can He ignore it, even if we do.

From an Unforgiving Heart to a Forgiving Heart

Jesus was very clear about unforgiveness. He said, "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins" (Matthew 6:14–15). If you have not forgiven others who have offended you, you cannot communicate the whole message of God's love and forgiveness. Forgiveness makes it possible to see the offender as someone like us: a sinner in need of God's love and forgiveness.

NOTES

From a Stingy Heart to a Generous Heart

God is the most generous person in the world and He wants us to be generous toward Him and other people. Being life-giving means that we use the gifts God gives us for more than just our own benefit. Our spiritual gifts are for building up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11–13). Some of our provision is for supplying the needs of God’s people (2 Corinthians 9:12), and some is for bringing people to Christ (Luke 16:9). Even our lives are lived as gifts given to others (Philippians 1:21–26), and we are to honor God with our bodies (1 Corinthians 6:20).

From a Rebellious Heart to an Obedient Heart

Moral rebellion in the human heart is the root of all sin against God. Obedience is an important element in our relationships, both human and divine. King Saul disregarded God’s instructions, lied about it, and then attempted to worship God. Samuel rebuked him and said,

Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the LORD?
To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.
For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.
Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has rejected you as king.

1 Samuel 15:22–23

Our worship, our testimony, our prayers, and our service are all meaningless if we won’t demonstrate our love for God by obeying Him. If we tell Him one thing but then live another way, we’ve made our worship and service worthless. Jesus told his disciples, “Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them” (John 14:21). Obeying God’s commands is the most practical way for us to demonstrate the submission of our own will to God’s will.

Conclusion

Devoted, humble, repentant, forgiving, generous, and obedient are the attributes of a heart prepared for ministry. God will meet each of us where we are on our journey toward Christ-likeness, and it is God who will personally cleanse each of us, making us into a vessel fit for His purposes.

NOTES

Foundation 2: Build on God's Word

Our primary reason for reading the Bible is to know God better. As we come to understand Him and His ways, we will naturally grow in our love for Him. As we grow in love, our desire to be near Him and obey Him grows. By His Spirit, we are also being slowly transformed into the likeness of Jesus. The time that we spend reading and meditating on the Bible helps produce the closeness with God we so desperately need if we are to have any impact in the world.

The Christian faith is founded upon the word of God which is 'living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword. It discerns our thoughts and intentions'.

Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience. For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Hebrews 4:11–13

In order to become mature believers, God's word is essential in order for us to know how to live as Christ-followers here on earth. The Bible tells us to treat the commandments of God as a treasure.

My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding—indeed, if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

Proverbs 2:1–5

God's Word saves and heals.

People in desperate situations need more than just human reassurances to receive healing in difficult circumstances. If they are unbelievers, they need salvation from sin. Unbelievers and believers alike need healing from brokenness and victory over Satan, the enemy who threatens to destroy us all. We offer what we have received: the salvation, victory, and healing which have come to us through God's Word.

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

1 Peter 1:23

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God's Word increases faith and blessing.

Through meditation on God's Word, we can build our faith and gain blessings which help us reach out to others. Listening to stories of human suffering and tragedy can bring great discouragement, but God's Word encourages our hearts and helps us to see the big picture: in the midst of today's pain, God *loves* us and is *for* us.

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

Romans 10:17

God's Word has power to destroy the attacks of Satan.

The enemy accuses and lies to each of us every day, but God's Word will give us the strength to resist him and it will bring victory to our battles. To be truly effective, we must shut the enemy's lying mouth, and nothing sends him running away like the Word of God.

The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Matthew 4:3–4

God's Word has relevance and meaning for every believer.

The Bible was written for *you*: to encourage you and to give you hope (Romans 15:4). So no matter how you choose to study the Bible, remember to always read prayerfully, personally, and obediently. Ask God to give you understanding (Psalm 119:18), and then allow His Word to become personal. Take time to reflect on it and apply it to your own life.

NOTES

Using God's Word with a Person in Crisis

Be Led by the Holy Spirit.

When somebody in crisis comes to you, ask the Lord what He wants to say to this person. Listen. If verses come to mind, trust that the Spirit is leading you. The enemy would not suggest you speak God's truth to somebody who would be helped by it! The Holy Spirit will lead you with compassion and sensitivity. Through the written Word of God, the Holy Spirit brings many things, including conviction, hope, healing, peace, and encouragement.

Be Sensitive.

God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Psalm 119:105). A lamp illuminates the darkness; it does not need to be used as a spotlight for interrogation. Let God's Word show the person the way to go, and do not give in to the temptation to shine the light in a person's eyes just to reveal spiritual blindness. God's Word is also "the sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17). When used with skill, a sword can keep an enemy away, but when handled carelessly, it can injure the person you're trying to rescue. God's Word is a powerful tool for fighting Satan, but it must be used gently and skillfully with people.

Conclusion

God has recorded His words for us in the Bible. Therefore, we rely on them to give us everything we need in our relationship of love and faithfulness with Him, in our personal lives, and in ministering to others. As we are led by the Holy Spirit to speak the encouragement, correction, and hope of God's truth, we anticipate falling more in love with the One whom the Scriptures reveal, as well as extending His love to others.

NOTES

Foundation 3: Begin with Worship

During a turbulent time in his reign as king of Judah, as we read in 2 Chronicles 20, King Jehoshaphat learned that three great armies had gathered to destroy Israel. Even though he was a powerful king, he was afraid and probably thought, *“How can I possibly defeat these three strong enemies? Their superior numbers will crush us! I can’t save our people.”* His assessment was right. He could not personally save his people from this assault. But Jehoshaphat wisely remembered that there was more to the situation than him and the problem. There was God.

Jehoshaphat gathered his people and began to declare how big and faithful and good God was. He responded to the army’s threat by remembering that God was present and by reflecting on what God had done in the past. Jehoshaphat remembered that God had won the victory even when the circumstances seemed impossible. Then this king declared to God, “We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you.” God replied through His prophet, “Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this great army. For the battle is not yours, but God’s.”

The next day, Jehoshaphat put his worship team in front of the army, and as they marched, they praised God. “As they began to sing and praise, the LORD set ambushes against the [armies], and they were defeated [and destroyed] one another” (2 Chronicles 20:22–23). Jehoshaphat knew he couldn’t do it alone. God promised to do the work. *Beginning with worship was the key.*

When we enter into this battle proclaiming the truth that every human life is sacred, we throw ourselves directly in front of the enemy’s line of sight. His focus and ultimate purpose is the destruction of the very image of God. This is by far the largest-scale battle the enemy has waged, one that goes beyond even a “David and Goliath” sized fight. Our first action needs to be a humble posture, bowing down to the only One who has the power to defeat the schemes of the enemy.

What Is Worship?

We often limit worship to music. Music is one means by which we can worship but worship is also found in our simple acts of service, in the kind words spoken to someone in need, and the time we take to be with our families. There are countless ways to worship God and music is just one of them.

Worship involves both adoration of who God is (our heart attitude) and actions that express our love for God (our behavior). Anything that praises and pleases God is worship. The Bible expresses the idea in this way: “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31). If we think of offering to God everything we are for His service, the words of the apostle Paul help us express what we mean: “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship” (Romans 12:1).

NOTES

Why Is Worship Important?

We worship God in our lives for many reasons. We worship because God is worthy of worship, because we're made to worship Him, because impact with people flows out of closeness with God, because worship wins spiritual battles, and because worship builds up our faith.

God is worthy!

The main reason worship must have top priority is because of who God is—the person and character of God Himself. He is worthy to be honored and glorified in every place and at every time. We also praise God for what he has done both in history and in our lives. No matter the circumstances, God deserves to be praised.

I will sing of the LORD's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you have established your faithfulness in heaven itself.

Psalm 89:1–2

We are made for worship.

We were created to know God and enjoy Him both now and forever. We have a built-in need to be connected to God and to adore Him. We cannot be truly satisfied without worshipping God, and our lives are filled with joy when we fulfill our purpose.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

1 Peter 2:9

Impact with people flows out of closeness with God.

If we neglect our worship time with the Lord, we can only offer to other people what is ours: limited energy, inconsistent love, and flawed deeds. We will never be enough on our own. People need what is God's: unlimited power, unfailing love, and perfect deeds. *He will always be enough.* Before we minister to others, we must be filled up with God Himself through worship.

Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

John 15:4–5

NOTES

Worship wins the battle.

Worship causes us to turn our eyes from our circumstances to focus on the One who sits on the throne with power and mercy. It enables us to persevere when our ministry is discouraging, and it strengthens us to endure when we are mocked and scorned.

[Fix] our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Hebrews 12:2–3

Before we set foot on the battleground, we need to do as King Jehoshaphat did: worship the One who has all authority and power. God will work the victory for us and for Himself.

Worship builds up our faith.

Wholehearted worship causes us to believe God and put all our confidence in His promises. Consequently, as we talk with individuals who come to us for help with a life-and-death decision, we are no longer helpless, no longer unsure of what we must say. We can pass on a vibrant hope that comes from worshipping our God whose mercy is new every morning.

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Colossians 2:6–7

How Does Worship Affect Us?

While we worship God because He is worthy of all praise, worship also changes us in significant ways. Worship often corrects our thoughts, our emotions, and our actions.

Worship corrects our thoughts: HEAD

Lies and truth are constantly warring for our attention, and that battle takes place in our minds. Lies fuel thoughts like, “God is not enough. He can’t possibly forgive this. He doesn’t care about me.” These lies obscure God’s power, mercy, and love. Choosing to worship, however, will defeat the lies. Each time we choose to worship God, we give attention to truth. As we give truth attention, truth gets more rooted in us, correcting our thoughts. When we choose to say, “Thank You, God, that You are bigger than this problem. Thank You that You forgive even this. Thank You that You love this person,” then the lies fade away. Because worship involves speaking the truth about God, it has the power to correct our thinking, realigning it with the truth.

NOTES

Worship corrects our emotions: HEART

When we adore God, we tune out all the other things competing for our attention and we focus on Him, His names, and His ways. As we do, we remember that He loves us no matter what happens, and our insecurities fade away. We remember that He is our Provider and our Defender, and our fears dissolve. We remember that He cares about us and has promised to make all things turn out for our good, and our anxieties crumble into dust. At some point, we discover that instead of feeling insecure, fearful, and anxious, we now feel safe, confident, and at peace.

Worship corrects our actions: HANDS

Even as Christians, we often have sharp tongues and rough hands. We simply do not love others as Christ loves us, and it shows in our actions. However, as we worship Jesus Christ, He reveals Himself to us. He fills us with His love until we spill over. At some point, we find ourselves looking around, longing to pour out this love on others. In this way, we become more like Jesus, who seeks us out to love us. As He fills us each day with His great love, we give that love to people in everyday ways by donating our listening ears, honest tongues, practical helps, valuable time, and fervent prayers. These loving actions are the result of God at work in us.

Conclusion

We live to worship God in all of life's activities, from the ordinary, everyday tasks to the most special events that happen in a person's lifetime. Through God's call to us in redemption and our response to Him in worship, we draw near to God, and He draws near to us. As we see Him more clearly, we realize how able God is to meet the needs people have and help them respond to their problems. As we are humbled by His love, we begin to truly love those whom we are trying to help. Knowing how loved we are, we are finally free to step back and let God do His work of redemption in people's lives, and this is when the battle is won.

King Jehoshaphat of Judah was wise to trust the prophet's words that the battle was not his to fight but God's, and he was wise to believe God was able to defeat the enemy, for this ensured the victory. When we minister to others, let's begin with words and lives that worship God in spirit and truth, for we can be sure He is going to love people through us and win the victory for them.

NOTES

Foundation 4: Depend on Prayer

Prayer is simply communication between God and us. It's a vital part of a growing relationship with Him. He invites us to pour out our hearts to Him, ask Him our deepest questions, express our frustrations and dreams, laugh, and even rest quietly with Him. In return, He tells us what's on His heart. *This is all prayer.* You talk with God, and God talks with you.

How Do You Pray?

When we realize that through prayer we get to come into God's very presence, learn about Him, and be known by Him, we no longer see prayer as an activity we "should do." *Prayer becomes the key to a relationship that we cannot live without.* We have a duty to pray as Christians because God commands us in Scripture to pray, but when we realize that prayer is one of the primary ways through which we can know God better, our **duty** to pray can quickly become our greatest **delight**. In the process of praying, knowing and loving God more is the goal. And while prayer is just talking and listening, which anyone can do without instruction, it is helpful to remember some other important guidelines.

Pray about all things.

God knows the number of hairs on your head. He cares about everything that affects you. Like a caring parent, God listens compassionately. He delights in you. What's important is not *how* you talk but *that* you talk.

Be honest.

God invites you to honestly share your struggles, joys, and challenges. Honesty with God builds trust and is an important part of growing closer to Him.

Use God's Word.

One of the simplest ways to pray is to model our prayers after those recorded in the Bible, like a prayer of King David (Psalm 25:4–5), Hannah (1 Samuel 2:1–10), Moses (Exodus 33:13), or Paul (Ephesians 1:3–14).

Believe that He hears and answers you.

Your relationship and communication with God are based on trust. When you pray, trust God to hear and answer you (James 1:5–8).

NOTES

Pray for your enemies.

God desires all people to come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ. Imitate Jesus, who prayed for His enemies even as He was being murdered on the cross: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). Jesus prayed for his enemies because He values people as eternal beings for whom He died on the cross: “But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).

Pray alone and with others.

God loves to spend time alone with you; it is an important aspect of being in relationship with Him. He also wants to meet with you in a community of believers. “A cord of three strands is not quickly broken” (Ecclesiastes 4:12b).

Listen to God.

We listen to what God has said in His Word, the Bible. But God also invites us to listen to Him in prayer. “So, as the Holy Spirit says: ‘Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts’” (Hebrews 3:7–8a).

Conclusion

As you minister to others, it is a relief and a joy to know you are not alone. God, the best Counselor, is with you. Our wise and powerful God stands ready to communicate all of His love to us and to others. As you talk and listen to God, He will direct you and give you all the resources you need to minister to the people he brings into your path. He will do exceedingly and abundantly beyond all we can ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20).

NOTES

Foundation 5: Engage in Spiritual Warfare

Our world is physical—we can see it, taste it, and touch it. But it also has a spiritual dimension. Scripture reveals that God is a spirit, we have spirits, and there are spirit beings called angels, some of whom fell with Satan and became evil spirits. In the Bible, they are often called demons, and these beings are at work in the world. The conflict between God (and His angelic warriors) and Satan (and his wicked spirits) is an ongoing battle often called *spiritual warfare*.

Spiritual warfare is happening all the time. Some regard it as superstitious or ignorant to believe in a devil. Others focus far too much energy and emotion on fearing Satan and the spirit world. Neither extreme is wise nor an appropriate response to the reality of these ordinarily unseen but active beings. You are engaging an enemy who “prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

When Christ died on the cross Satan was defeated. His plans for the destruction of the image of God were frustrated. Since that time the only thing he has left is to spit in the face of God by doing all he can to degrade His image through the diminishing of the sacredness of human life. When God’s people rise up, bringing the lies of the enemy to light, an unprecedented attack is waged right at the center of Satan’s strategy to lash out at God.

Why Is It Essential to Wage Spiritual Warfare?

Spiritual warfare is necessary because the nature of reality includes battles that must be fought “‘not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty” (Zechariah 4:6). If you have any doubts about the reality of spiritual warfare in the world today, read Scripture, believe with faith what is written there, and ask God to help you see what is really going on around you. Here are two specific reasons why the battle over human life must be waged in the spiritual realm.

You cannot win the battle for life by ignoring it.

Satan wants to destroy life wherever possible, including the lives of preborn children. Through the death of a preborn child, he also wants to destroy the woman’s physical, emotional, and spiritual life. You have the opportunity and privilege to stand in the gap against our unseen enemy, and to speak truth and hope when he throws lies, confusion, and despair at women and men facing the crisis of an unplanned pregnancy. Out of your secure place of relationship with God, you wage war, and because Christ won against all onslaughts of Satan, you too will win.

[Jesus said,] “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

John 10:10

NOTES

You cannot win the battle for life by fighting the wrong enemy.

Who exactly is the enemy of life? It is neither the mother or the father, the abortionist and his or her helpers, friends, nor family members who may be pressuring a woman to choose abortion. Although they all are making sinful choices by advocating for abortion, *they are not the enemy*. They too have believed lies about God, lies that He is not strong enough, compassionate enough, wise enough, or relevant enough to be of help in this situation. *Your enemy and the enemy of those considering abortion is God's enemy, Satan, who opposes God and His work among mankind.*

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Ephesians 6:12

What Do We Need to Know to Wage Spiritual Warfare?

Know God, Your Commander-in-Chief

There is no one like God. No one is His equal. He could obliterate His enemies with one word, but He chooses not to. Instead, He trains us to fight alongside Him, and His unconventional methods are unbeatable. They include speaking the truth in love at all times, overcoming evil with good, and offering forgiveness and healing.

Jesus understood spiritual warfare from a human's perspective, because He experienced it. However, in every battle, Christ won. In the war between Satan's kingdom of darkness and Jesus' kingdom of light, Satan's greatest attack was to crucify Christ. It was also Satan's greatest defeat, for three days later Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Through His crucifixion and resurrection, the Lord Jesus paid the penalty for mankind's sins and defeated Satan and his kingdom. It was a powerful spiritual confrontation, and Christ decisively won.

And having disarmed the powers and authorities, [Jesus] made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Colossians 2:15

Know Satan, Your Enemy

Satan is not equal to God. He is lower than God, a created angel who rebelled against God and was exiled from heaven. Satan is a defeated rebel who has no more power than God allows him, and someday God will throw him into a lake of fire (Revelation 20:10).

God wants you to overcome your enemy. To do that, you must recognize Satan's strategies and know God's countermeasures. According to Genesis 3:1, this enemy is more "crafty than any of the wild animals." Satan uses a variety of tactics depending on the people and circumstances involved, but with experience you'll find that he has only so many lies. When he finds a lie that works, he often uses it over and over simply to wear us down.

NOTES

Some of Satan's basic tactics include:

1. *Attacking your identity*—"You know you're just going to fail as a leader."
2. *Attacking God's character*—"God's going to leave you all alone with that suffering person, and you'll have nothing to say."
3. *Shifting your focus*—"You're spending too much time in prayer. You need to spend more time finding ways to fix things."
4. *Cutting off your relationships*—"God hasn't spoken to you in months. Why bother waking up early to listen to Him be silent?"
5. *Draining your resources*—"You can hardly function even on three cups of coffee. What makes you think you've got the energy to be a leader on top of everything else?"

Remember that trials and challenges are not automatically satanic. Rather, they are a matter for discernment and prayer. Satan attacks with lies, and his deceptions are often insidious and subtle. Spiritual warfare is characterized by an attack on your mind. Wrong thinking begins small and often goes undetected, but the errors you believe, sometimes unconsciously, lay the foundation for what you feel and the decisions you make. We must be perceptive, and quick to identify truths from lies.

Know Yourself, Mighty Warrior

Today Satan continues to harass us. But because of Christ's victory on the cross, we also have victory! We are no longer victims. We are more than conquerors (Romans 8:37). But how is this possible? God declares we are able to overcome our enemy because we are in Christ and because Christ has given us His power and authority. This is part of the grace which we received when we believed in Him.

For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

1 John 5:4-5

When you believed in Christ, you were crucified with Him (Galatians 2:20). You were also resurrected with Him, though your sins remained dead. Christ is in you, and at the same time you are in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30). Everything He has, you have also. He is righteous, therefore you are righteous. He is absolutely victorious over the enemy; you are absolutely victorious. Everything God did for Christ the Head, He did for us, the body.

Jesus prepared his disciples for everything, including war. He cast out demons and then sent out the disciples to do the same. He expects you, as a modern-day disciple, to join this battle too.

When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

Luke 9:1-2

At Jesus' ascension, His parting words included instructions for receiving power. Through the Holy Spirit, we have all the power we need to defeat the enemy. It is important that each of us, as well as the entire church, accept this commissioning gift of power and authority. With the power and authority of God Himself girding us, there is no place for fear or for a small view of our strength in Christ.

NOTES

Spiritual Warfare Takes Strength and Courage

As disciples of Christ in a world controlled by our enemy, we are in a life-and-death battle, and the battle is intense. But there is no need to fear. God calls us to be mighty warriors, and He always equips those whom He calls. It takes courage to face difficult, life-altering circumstances—your own and those of the people you speak to about the value of human life. It also takes courage to be compassionate, and it takes courage to speak the truth. But you can be strong and courageous, because

No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. . . . Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.

Joshua 1:5, 9

Because you have God's promises and His very presence, you can be courageous. It takes courage to refuse to retreat. As you stand firm against the enemy, refusing to succumb to his lies and attacks, he must flee (James 4:7). In fact, when Paul tells us in Ephesians to put on the armor of God, he exhorts us four times to *stand firm*. This makes sense when you recall that the enemy is already defeated and merely a thief—he can only steal your victory if you run from the battle. All you have to do is stand firm and remind him that you know you are the victor, and he will retreat.

Conclusion

Spiritual warfare is happening all the time. As you become more vocal and diligent in protecting human life, the enemy will personally assault you at your weak points. But this is what you were born for—to be a soldier of the cross. You do not need to fear warfare; God promises you will overcome. However, there is no shortcut to becoming a skilled warrior; you must train. As you do, never forget that:

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38–39

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Foundation 6: Live Out the Gospel

Jesus came to bring us abundant life, eternal life (John 10:10); that truth is at the heart of the Gospel. So to share this “Good News” (Luke 4:43) about Jesus—to *evangelize*—means that we must share about the life that He offers and the life that He desires each person to possess. If love motivates us to tell others about Jesus, then that same love should motivate us to include the truth about how much God values each and every human life, including the preborn.

The time you invest in other people must always be seen as a divine appointment. God is at work in their lives, even if you can’t see it. Therefore, you will want to be intentional about listening, caring, and speaking words of hope to others. Remember that the most significant word of hope you can offer to others is the truth that God loves them, no matter how difficult their circumstances may be. He sees their struggles, and He is there for them.

By living out the Gospel of Jesus Christ you can demonstrate care for others by speaking the truth in love. This is the life-giving nature of the Gospel, and it is especially helpful for people during a time of crisis. In the midst of a person’s struggle, he or she may need both a cup of cold water (Matthew 10:42) and the Living Bread (John 6:51).

What Does It Mean to *Live Out* the Gospel?

The heart of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the good news that God loves us so much that He sent His Son to die on our behalf, so that we might experience His love forever! This *great* news is true for the whole person: spiritual, emotional, mental, social, and physical. To live out the Gospel means being compassionate, doing what we can to meet others’ needs, and caring about their lives. And it means sharing the hope we have in Christ in a way that conveys to other people the relevance of the Gospel for every area of their lives.

Why Is it Important to Live Out the Gospel?

Only God can meet a person’s deepest needs.

By listening to a person, seeking solutions, offering confidential counsel, and providing direct and practical care, we help to relieve the difficulty of their situation. As we do this for others, we are living out the Gospel. Sometimes that is the most we can do.

Other times, due to the very nature of a person’s crisis, they may be tender and open to considering their deeper, spiritual needs and discovering God’s purpose for their life. A man or woman may be silently screaming, “I cannot do this on my own. There must be more to life than my hopeless circumstances!” When a person comes to the end of themselves, they are ready to receive the truth of a loving Father. For it is *only* our loving Father who can meet a person’s deepest needs.

NOTES

God wants His love to be expressed to people.

When you talk to another person, it's important to remember that God loves that individual. He wants the best for them, and that includes salvation, a life of purpose, and a close relationship with Him. As His servant, you have been commissioned and commanded to pass on His message of love. It is your privilege and responsibility to share this truth with everyone you meet.

God has an amazing way of matching people up. He knows what a particular person needs to hear, and He often brings just the right person into his or her life. You will be amazed how your background, circumstances, and daily experiences with God will connect with another person's own background, circumstances, and need for encouragement. There are no coincidences with God.

Conclusion

We are often given the privilege of expressing God's heart and being His hands, reaching out to those in need. Even so, it remains God's job to draw a person to Himself and lead them to repentance through His kindness (Romans 2:4). Everything you *do*, not just what you *say*, is an expression and reflection of God's love. With every person you encounter throughout each day, you have the opportunity to minister God's message of love and hope through your words and deeds—and *that* is living out the Gospel.

NOTES

Appendix: Spiritual Foundations of Ministry

Exercise 1 (30 minutes)

1. Select five volunteers to come to the front of the room.
2. Give one pottery painting print, in random order, to each volunteer.
3. Ask them to put the paintings in the right order. No further instructions should be given; nothing else needs to be said.
4. Once they have determined what they think the right order is, ask the rest of the participants if they think the order is correct. If they say “no” then ask them to help the volunteers.
5. When everyone has agreed on the order, ask them what the paintings represent.
6. Praise them for the good work. Then, if needed, rearrange the order of the paintings.
7. Build on what the participants have already talked about with the paintings and then go into further explanation of LIFE International’s spiritual foundations paradigm as explained at the beginning of this chapter.

Exercise 2

Teaching Spiritual Foundations (1 Hour)

Small groups design a learning experience

Ask: “I just facilitated a learning experience to teach about the “Intimacy Before Impact” paradigm. How did I teach it?” Allow a couple people to respond.

Explain: I could have just explained the principle of Intimacy Before Impact without using the pictures and without the help of these volunteers. I could have just given a lecture about it. **Ask:** “Why did I choose to take the time to use the pictures and volunteers?” “If I ask you tomorrow to explain Intimacy Before Impact do you think you would be able to remember most of it?” “If I had just lectured about it without using the exercise how much do you think you would have remembered?”

Explain: “Now I’m going to give YOU the opportunity to design a CREATIVE learning experience too! We will divide into 6 groups and each group will be assigned one of the 6 Spiritual Foundations. Your group will design a CREATIVE learning experience, not a lecture, and will teach the Spiritual Foundation you have been assigned from the manual.

Divide participants into 6 “Teaching Teams.”

Once they are in their groups assign one Spiritual Foundation to each Teaching Team.

Explain again: Each team will design a learning experience for their assigned Spiritual Foundation. They will need to present some kind of “creative expression” that will help others remember their Spiritual Foundation, just like the pictures helped you remember the idea of Intimacy Before Impact. Challenge them to be as creative as they like: a painting, sculpture, poem, song, dance, drama...ANYTHING that will help others to remember their assigned foundation.

Give each Teaching Team the small-group handouts for their assigned spiritual foundation.

Allow them 45-60 minutes to prepare their presentations. Note: one great scheduling strategy is to place the Intimacy Before Impact session as the last session of the day. Take 30 minutes to present the introduction, divide the participants into 6 Teaching Teams and allow them 30 minutes to prepare, if they need more time they can choose to meet for as long as they wish during the evening. The first session of the next day then starts with their presentations. This of course will only work if no training sessions are planned for the evening.

Spiritual Foundation Presentations (2 hours 30 minutes: 60 min. preparation, 90 min. presentation)

1. Each group is given 15 minutes to teach using a group-designed learning experience.
2. After each presentation the facilitator should ensure the main points were clear and ask the participants: “How is this foundation important to becoming a life-giver or why is it necessary to any life-giving ministry?”
3. Be sure the teaching teams covered the content of this Spiritual Foundation as presented in the manual. If they missed any important aspects you will need to emphasize those areas or ask questions to the participants to help them reflect on any points not emphasized.

Handout 5.1

Spiritual Foundation 1: Prepare Your Heart

You will have 45 minutes for your group to complete the exercise below.

1. In your group, read “Prepare Your Heart.”
2. Discuss the chapter and **answer the questions**: How is the “**Prepare Your Heart**” Spiritual Foundation important to becoming a life-giver? Why is it necessary to any life-giving ministry?
3. Design a learning experience to help participants understand and remember the importance of this spiritual foundation. Be as creative as possible: a dramatic presentation, a sculpture, a drawing, song, poem, etc.
4. Your learning experience should be no longer than 15 minutes.

Be sure your teaching includes:

- From a Divided Heart to a Devoted Heart
- From a Prideful heart to a Humble Heart
- From an Unrepentant heart to a Repentant Heart
- From an Unforgiving Heart to a Forgiving Heart
- From a Stingy Heart to a Generous Heart
- From a Rebellious Heart to an Obedient Heart.
- Why “preparing your heart” is so important to becoming a life-giver or being involved in life-giving ministry.

Handout 5.2

Spiritual Foundation 2: Build on God's Word

You will have 45 minutes for your group to complete the exercise below.

1. In your group, read "Build on God's Word."
2. Discuss the chapter and **answer the questions**: How is the **"Build on God's Word"** Spiritual Foundation important to becoming a life-giver? Why is it necessary to any life-giving ministry?
3. Design a learning experience to help participants understand and remember the importance of this spiritual foundation. Be as creative as possible: a dramatic presentation, a sculpture, a drawing, song, poem, etc.
4. Your learning experience should be no longer than 15 minutes.

Be sure your teaching includes:

- God's Word saves and heals.
- God's Word increases faith and blessing.
- God's Word has power to destroy the attacks of Satan.
- God's Word has relevance and meaning for every believer.
- Why "building on God's Word" is so important to becoming a life-giver or being involved in life-giving ministry.

Handout 5.3

Spiritual Foundation 3: Begin with Worship

You will have 45 minutes for your group to complete the exercise below.

1. In your group, read “Begin with Worship.”
2. Discuss the chapter and **answer the questions**: How is the “**Begin with Worship**” Spiritual Foundation important to becoming a life-giver? Why is it necessary to any life-giving ministry?
3. Design a learning experience to help participants understand and remember the importance of this spiritual foundation. Be as creative as possible: a dramatic presentation, a sculpture, a drawing, song, poem, etc.
4. Your learning experience should be no longer than 15 minutes.

Be sure your teaching includes:

- What is worship?
- Why is worship important?
- How does worship affect us?
- Why “beginning with worship” is so important to becoming a life-giver or being involved in life-giving ministry.

Handout 5.4

Spiritual Foundation 4: Depend on Prayer

You will have 45 minutes for your group to complete the exercise below.

1. In your group, read “Depend on Prayer.”
2. Discuss the chapter and **answer the questions**: How is the “**Depend on Prayer**” Spiritual Foundation important to becoming a life-giver? Why is it necessary to any life-giving ministry?
3. Design a learning experience to help participants understand and remember the importance of this spiritual foundation. Be as creative as possible: a dramatic presentation, a sculpture, a drawing, song, poem, etc.
4. Your learning experience should be no longer than 15 minutes.

Be sure your teaching includes:

- How do you pray?
- Pray about all things
- Be honest
- Use God’s Word
- Believe that He hears and answers you
- Pray for your enemies
- Pray alone and with others
- Listen to God
- Why “depending on prayer” is so important to becoming a life-giver or being involved in life-giving ministry.

Handout 5.5

Spiritual Foundation 5: Engage in Spiritual Warfare

You will have 45 minutes for your group to complete the exercise below.

1. In your group, read “Engage in Spiritual Warfare.”
2. Discuss the chapter and **answer the questions**: How is the “**Engage in Spiritual Warfare**” Spiritual Foundation important to becoming a life-giver? Why is it necessary to any life-giving ministry?
3. Design a learning experience to help participants understand and remember the importance of this spiritual foundation. Be as creative as possible: a dramatic presentation, a sculpture, a drawing, song, poem, etc.
4. Your learning experience should be no longer than 15 minutes.

Be sure your teaching includes:

- Why is it essential to wage spiritual Warfare?
- What do we need to know to wage spiritual warfare?
- Spiritual warfare takes strength and courage.
- Why “engaging in spiritual warfare” is so important to becoming a life-giver or being involved in life-giving ministry.

Handout 5.6

Spiritual Foundation 6: Live Out the Gospel

You will have 45 minutes for your group to complete the exercise below.

1. In your group, read “Live Out the Gospel.”
2. Discuss the chapter and **answer the questions**: How is the “**Live Out the Gospel**” Spiritual Foundation important to becoming a life-giver? Why is it necessary to any life-giving ministry?
3. Design a learning experience to help participants understand and remember the importance of this spiritual foundation. Be as creative as possible: a dramatic presentation, a sculpture, a drawing, song, poem, etc.
4. Your learning experience should be no longer than 15 minutes.

Be sure your teaching includes:

- What does it mean to *Live Out* the Gospel?
- Why is it important to live out the Gospel?
- Only God can meet a person’s deepest needs.
- God wants His love to be expressed to people.
- Why “living out the gospel” is so important to becoming a life-giver or being involved in life-giving ministry.

God's Design for Marriage and the Family

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.”

Ephesians 5:31–32

The Learner Will:

1. Explain the significance of marriage as a “covenant.”
2. Identify the ways in which marriage is a reflection of God.
3. Distinguish some ways in which their cultural traditions or practices regarding marriage have diverged from the biblical worldview.
4. Recognize the responsibilities of husbands and wives toward each other.
5. Identify the ways in which children are more than slaves or property of their parents.

Key Points

- God is the creator of the institution of marriage.
- Husbands and wives are all directed by God to submit to one another.
- God’s primary exhortation toward husbands is to love their wives and for wives to respect their husbands.
- Marriage between one man and one woman is at the core of the Christian family.
- Children are not the property of their mothers and fathers but are equal image-bearers of God.

Scripture References

Ephesians 5:31-32, Genesis 2:18, Genesis 2:22-24, Mark 10:9, Ephesians 5:21–33, Proverbs 22:6, Deuteronomy 6:5-7, Ephesians 6:4, Psalms 127:3-5, Matthew 18:6, Matthew 18:10, Proverbs 24:11

TRAINING HELPS

Recommended time for this session: 3 Hours

The majority of the content within this chapter will be brought out through the exercises themselves. When a participant mentions one of the points within this chapter, as a facilitator be sure to give emphasis to that point. The facilitator should create dialogue on any points in this chapter that participants do not mention.

TRAINING HELPS

Complete exercise 1 (see appendix at the end of this chapter).

Marriage Was Created by God

According to the Bible, God Himself began the marriage arrangement in the Garden of Eden, when he joined Adam and Eve in marriage. In Genesis 2:18—for the first time during Creation—God said that something was *not* good: the fact that the man He had created was alone. “Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib^[b] he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called “woman,” for she was taken out of man.’ That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.” (Genesis 2:22-24). *God* chose to make a wife for Adam. *God* brought Eve to Adam. Becoming husband and wife was not an arrangement that the man and the woman created for themselves.

Marriage is a holy covenant before God, an agreement defined by Scripture as a relationship meant to last a lifetime. This was affirmed by Jesus Himself who said, in Mark 10:9, “Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.” In the Jewish custom, God’s people signed a written agreement at the time of the marriage to seal this covenant. The marriage ceremony, therefore, is meant to be a public demonstration of a couple’s commitment to a covenant relationship. It’s not the *ceremony* that’s most meaningful in a marriage; it’s the *covenant* before God and men.

The Christian Marriage

Ephesians 5:32 says that in marriage “a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.” The union of a man and woman reflects the image of God by forming a picture of the intimate relationship between Jesus Christ and His followers, the Church.

NOTES

TRAINING HELPS

Ask participants to consider the following questions: How is marriage a reflection of God's nature as three persons in one? In what other ways does marriage reflect the image of God?

Marriage is a reflection of God's nature as three persons in one: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When a man and woman come together with God at the center of their marriage covenant, they mirror God's own image. Marriage is often seen as intensely personal—something to be kept private between the husband and wife. But marriage is also, by nature, a public act and an open acknowledgment of God's role as covenant-keeper. Marriage—and not just the initial ceremony—is meant to be a perpetual reflection of God's image, and a witness to His sustaining grace in our lives.

The Roles of Husband and Wife**TRAINING HELPS**

Complete exercise 2 (see appendix at the end of this chapter).

Although men and women have equal value in the eyes of God, the Bible gives specific roles to each husband and wife within the marriage covenant. Ephesians 5:21–33 provides the guidelines for husbands and wives in a Christian family. The primary exhortation—for husbands and wives—is to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (verse 21). The wife is instructed to submit herself to her husband as she does to the Lord (verse 22), and to respect him (verse 33). The husband is commanded to love his wife as Christ loved the church (verse 25), and as he loves his own body (verse 28).

The combination of joint submission, along with husbands showing love and wives showing respect, will establish the proper foundation for happiness and for mutual blessing in marriage, as God continues the good work he has begun and brings it to completion in the relationship of marriage.

NOTES

The Christian Family

TRAINING HELPS

Complete exercise 3 (see appendix at the end of this chapter).

Marriage is at the core of the Christian family: one man and one woman married before God for life. At the first marriage, God did not only unite Adam and Eve in a lifelong covenant, but He also told them to be fruitful and multiply, and to fill the earth and subdue it. This would be done through procreation, the natural outcome of the marital sexual union, and the family would be expanded to include children, if God chooses to bless a couple with them.

Every human culture has embraced and recognized a family unit, complete with rules and expectations of how that family unit is to behave in order to produce a healthy society. But there can be times in any culture when the human expectation of family is at odds with the biblical worldview. We must not allow the love, mercy, and compassion of the Christian model of marriage to be replaced with the domination, rebellion, and fear that mark so many marriages and families in the world.

Proverbs 22:6 says, “Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.” This is the responsibility of every parent: mother *and* father. “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. *You shall teach them diligently to your children*, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise” (Deuteronomy 6:5-7, emphasis added).

The seeds we plant in the hearts of our children—most importantly the love of God—will grow root and influence their every action. This is why it is so important that we plant the word of God in our children’s hearts from an early age.

The Christian Father

Often a husband also has the duty and responsibility of being a father. From fathers we learn the fear of God, the importance of studying Scripture, and the character traits that help us to succeed in life. The Bible says a father is to be diligent in instructing his children in the ways and words of the Lord for their own spiritual development and well-being. It is a *father’s* job—not the school’s, not society’s, not even the Church’s job—to bring children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). “What does it mean to be a man?” “What does it mean to serve God?” “How do I love my wife?” “How do I lead in the home?” “How should I raise my kids?” “How do I serve my church?” “How do I serve my community?” All of these vital questions can be given an answer by children following the example of a godly father.

The Christian husband and father can be an instrument of grace in God’s hand. Men must be constantly aware of the high calling they have, with the support and partnership of their wives, to create God-centered families and raise up the next generation of men and women who will expand the Kingdom of God.

NOTES

The Christian Mother

Aside from being a wife, many married women will have the blessing of being a mother. Mothers have a unique and crucial role in the lives of their children, a role that cannot be replaced by any other person. The role of a mother starts even before birth, when God is developing in a woman the character, values, and principles that she will pass down to her children. The importance of a mother's role need not diminish as the children grow older. Mothers can continue to be a source of guidance and wisdom, even when their children are adults and have children of their own. While the role of a mother changes throughout the years, the love, care, nurture, and encouragement given by a mother should never end.

The Gift of Children

The word of God says, "Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their opponents in court." (Psalm 127:3-5). Jesus himself said, "If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea." (Matthew 18:6). He also said, "See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven" (Matthew 18:10).

Parents have no authority to abuse our children—whether physically, emotionally, or sexually. We must not treat them as slaves or as property. Each of them was made in the image of God, and Christ died for *their* sins just as He died for *yours*.

As parents we are first and foremost called to protect our children: to protect their lives and to protect them from harm or from those that would do them harm. Abortionists are the number-one enemy of preborn children. They make their living by taking the lives of children. Proverbs 24:11 says, "Rescue those being led away to death." Death is exactly what is in store for many unplanned, preborn babies if mothers and fathers do not stand up, protect, and defend their children—those that the Lord calls a heritage and a reward.

NOTES

Conclusion

TRAINING HELPS

Go back and repeat exercise 1. Compare their answers now with their answers at the beginning, giving special emphasis to their new understanding of the biblical perspective of marriage and family.

In every culture, society, and nation worldwide, the family holds a special importance. God loves, cares for, and provides for us—and for the world—through families. He has granted authority for families to function according to his design. God’s design for the family is without equal, and is not replaceable by any other social institution, for nowhere else are human beings better equipped to live together in harmonious, lifelong, loving relationships. By attempting to undermine and destroy the family, the evil one seeks to destroy the very fabric the Lord has created through which His blessings flow. And God’s greatest blessing—aside from salvation—is human life itself, the source of which is designed to be human marriage.

Through marriage we can learn about unconditional love, respectful honor, how to forgive, and how to be forgiven. We can see our shortcomings and grow from that insight. We can develop a servant’s heart, and draw closer to God. We can protect against abortion, which is the unlawful taking of preborn human life, and we can raise up a family that honors God and brings about life-transforming change in those we influence.

Review Questions

1. How is marriage a reflection of God’s nature?
2. What is God’s primary exhortation for a husband toward his wife? What about a wife toward her husband?
3. After God joined Adam and Eve in marriage, what did He tell them to do?
4. Who is primarily responsible for bringing children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord?
5. Why must fathers and mothers not treat their children as property or as slaves?

NOTES

Appendix: God's Design for the Family

Exercise 1 (10 minutes)

1. For this exercise, the facilitator can make two columns on the board or on large sheets of blank poster paper (as illustrated below) with the heading "Marriage" and "Family."
2. "How does the world define marriage?" (Write their responses on the board)
3. "How do **you** define marriage?" (Write their responses on the board)
4. "How does the world define family?" (Write their responses on the board)
5. "How do **you** define family?" (Write their responses on the board)

Marriage	Family
<hr/>	<hr/>
The World How does the world define Marriage?	The World How does the world define Family?
 YOU How do YOU define Marriage?	 YOU How do YOU define Family?
<hr/>	<hr/>

Exercise 2 (1 Hour)

Group Work (20 minutes)

1. Have participants divide into four groups (two groups of men and two groups of women)
2. Give the following instructions to **one** group of men and **one** group of women (after passing out Handout 1 to them):
 - Examine this verse together: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Ephesians 5:25).
 - According to this verse write a list of **how Jesus loved the church and served his disciples** who were the foundation of the church. (Write this list with a marker on a large sheet of blank paper.)
 - Remember, this is **not** a list of how husbands should love their wives. This is **only** a list of biblical examples of how Christ loved the church.
3. Give the following instructions to the remaining groups of men and women (after passing out Handout 2 to them)
 - Examine this verse together: “Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything” (Ephesians 5:24).
 - According to this verse write a list of **how the Church submits to Christ**. (Write this list on a large sheet of paper.)
 - Remember, this is **not** a list of how wives should submit their husbands. This is **only** a list of biblical examples of how the Church submitted to Christ.

Group Presentations (30 minutes)

1. After you have gathered the groups back together, **Group 1** men and women can present their lists.
2. After both groups present, the large group can discuss the similarities and differences among the lists.
3. **Group 2** men and women can now present their lists.
4. After both groups present, the large group can discuss the similarities and differences among the lists.

Concluding Remarks and Prayer (10 minutes)

Ending

After the groups have presented their lists, the large group can discuss what they discovered in the Bible about the topics of marriage and family, and how they might alter their earlier definitions of marriage and family.

HANDOUT 1

Group #1 (one small group each of men and women)

1. Examine this verse together: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Ephesians 5:25).
2. Make a list of biblical examples of how Jesus loved the church and served his disciples. (Make this list with the marker and large sheet of blank poster paper provided.)
3. Remember, this is NOT a list of how husbands should love their wives. This is ONLY a list of biblical examples of how Christ loved the church.
4. Choose a representative from your small group who will read your list to the large group.

HANDOUT 2

Group #2 (one small group each of men and women)

1. Examine this verse together: “Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything” (Ephesians 5:24).
2. Make a list of biblical examples of how the church submits to Christ. (Make this list with the marker and large sheet of blank poster paper provided.)
3. Remember, this is NOT a list of how wives should submit their husbands. This is ONLY a list of biblical examples of how the church is to submit to Christ.
4. Choose a representative from your small group who will read your list to the large group.

Exercise 3 (30 minutes Total)

Group work (10 minutes)

1. Have participants divide into two groups: one group of women and one group of men.
2. After passing out the included handouts, the instructor can read the instructions.
 - Divide your sheet of paper into two parts.
 - On the left side of the paper, list the biblical examples of how parents should treat their children (write the Bible references as well).
 - On the right side of the paper, list biblical examples about how children are to relate to their mother and father (write the Bible references as well).
 - In your group, think about where you live and discuss what you see happening when the biblical model is not followed.

Presentations (20 minutes)

1. Allow both groups to present their lists.
2. Discuss the similarities and differences.
3. Allow time for dialogue about what they see happening when the biblical model is not followed.

HANDOUT for exercise 3

1. Divide your sheet of paper into two parts.
2. On the left side of the paper, list the biblical examples of how parents should treat their children (write the Bible references as well).
3. On the right side of the paper, list biblical examples about how children are to relate to their mother and father (write the Bible references as well).

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES How parents should treat their children	BIBLICAL EXAMPLES How children should relate to their parents

4. In your group, think about where you live and discuss what you see happening when the biblical model is not followed.
5. Choose a representative from your small group who will read your list to the large group.

Biblical Sexuality

“That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.”

Genesis 2:24

The Learner Will:

1. Describe the act of sexual intercourse.
2. Explain the characteristics of godly biblical sexuality.
3. Identify the purposes of covenantal married sex.
4. Understand the unique roles of men and women and how each can express their sexuality in a biblical way.
5. Name one or more consequences of unbiblical sexual behavior.
6. List several biblical instructions for living sexually pure lives.

Key Points

- Biblical sexuality is men and women enjoying sex as the good gift God created and intended it to be within marriage.
- Biblical sexuality is men and women living according to the Bible's principles for sexual purity and holiness.
- God's purposes for man and woman in marriage are procreative (to produce children), unitive (to become “one flesh”), and to image God in the world.
- Participating in sex outside of biblical guidelines is sinful and causes spiritual, emotional, and physical consequences.

Scripture References

Genesis 2:24, 1 Corinthians 10:31, 1 Timothy 3:15, Genesis 4:1, Luke 1:34, Genesis 1:27–28, Proverbs 5:15–19, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 7, Malachi 2:14–15, Psalm 139:13, Romans 8:5–8, 1 John 1:9, Hebrews 13:4, Matthew 5:28, 1 Corinthians 6:13b, 18a, 2 Corinthians 10:5, Job 31:1, 1 Samuel 16:7, Philippians 4:8

TRAINING HELPS

Recommended time for this session: 2 Hours

It is helpful to begin this session by reminding participants of the questions from the beginning of this seminar: Is God speaking? If He is speaking, are you listening? If God is speaking and you are listening, what is he telling you to do?

It can also be very helpful to alert participants of the sensitive subject matter and vocabulary that will be used in this session. Saying something as simple as the following statement can prepare participants for this session: “We will be talking about sensitive subject matter in this session and will be using clinical terms to openly but modestly describe human reproduction. God is the designer and creator of sex, and everything He made is good! We need not be embarrassed talking about human sexuality.”

Part 1: Biblical Sexuality

TRAINING HELPS

Have participants turn to their neighbors and briefly discuss these three questions (in groups of 2-3):

1. Why do you think this subject is so difficult to talk about?
2. Why has this subject become “wrong” to talk about in the church?
3. Where and from whom do you want your children to learn about sexual relationships?

After they have had time to discuss the questions, it can be helpful to have some volunteers share their thoughts and reflections with the large group. Feel free to take some time for dialogue and responses from the large group.

God designed sex for our good and for His glory—it is a blessing from Him for us. It is good for us because it allows husbands and wives to partner with God in the creation of a new life—a child. Sex is also good for us because it allows husbands and wives to bond in the greatest expression of physical intimacy, during which they become “one flesh.” Sex is for God’s glory because every activity of life is to be done as a response of worship to God (1 Corinthians 10:31). Biblical sexuality is men and women using their sexual capacity as God created and intended it to be used.

For various reasons, the topic of sex is often difficult to talk about for people in every culture. Discussing sex may feel embarrassing, but since God created all things—including sex—His people should be able to find appropriate and helpful ways to talk about sex. Within their families, husbands and wives, along with parents and children, need to be able to talk about sex. It is better for children to learn about sex from their parents in a conversation that honors God and His design for human sexuality than in a worldly way from friends in the neighborhood, at school, or at one’s place of work.

Followers of Christ, pastors, and leaders in the church also need to be able to talk about sex within the church. God’s people are the guardians of the truth about sex, for the church of the living God is “the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15). The only institution on earth that has the calling, the authority, and the resources to boldly proclaim and restore the value and sacredness of human life and biblical sexual integrity is the Church—the living Body of Christ.

NOTES

What Is Sex?

TRAINING HELPS

Have participants consider the following questions: When you were a child how did boys and girls learn about sexual intercourse? When you were young who taught children about it or where did they learn it? Where do children first learn about it today?

If appropriate and there is enough confidence in this small group you could ask: How did you first learn about sex?

Complete Role-play exercise 1 (see appendix at the end of this chapter).

Sexual intercourse (or *having sex*) is a coming together of a man and a woman for reproduction (procreation) and for marital union. In addition, sexual intercourse provides a way for a couple to express love and emotional intimacy by giving and receiving pleasure to each other. Sexual intercourse is the act of a husband inserting his erect penis into his wife's vagina. During this uniting of a man's and a woman's sexual organs, a series of muscular contractions known as ejaculation delivers semen (including sperm cells) from the penis into the vagina. The sperm cells then travel from the vagina to the uterus then into the fallopian tubes. When one of these sperm cells fertilizes an egg, a new human life is conceived and pregnancy begins.

Human reproduction is the natural purpose and result of sexual intercourse, although sex does not always accomplish this purpose and result. God also designed sex to be pleasurable and meaningful for husband and wife, and the desire to have sex is one of the strongest human desires we know. God designed sex to be performed exclusively between a man and woman married to each other. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). When God gives children to a family, they provide a unique physical representation and reminder of the one-flesh relationship that bonds and blesses the husband and wife together throughout their married life.

The Bible uses the word *know* to refer to sexual intercourse, and sex is the deepest way for one human being to "know" another human being. "Now Adam *knew* Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain" (Genesis 4:1 NKJV, emphasis added). The mother of Jesus could not understand how she would conceive and give birth to a son without sexual intercourse. "Then Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I do not *know* a man'" (Luke 1:34 NKJV, emphasis added). Sex allows a husband and wife to know each other so intimately that they become "one flesh." Sex is more than just physical—it is also spiritual, emotional, and relational.

NOTES

What Is Biblical Sexuality?

Biblical sexuality values sex and sexuality the way that God does. Biblical sexuality is a gift from God, which He gave to us for our good. The Bible affirms the goodness of God's creation, which includes all creatures and their capacity for sex and sexuality. God made sexual intimacy between a husband and wife to be physically enjoyable, emotionally satisfying, and spiritually meaningful. When this gift from God is used properly, it brings Him glory.

1. *Sex within Marriage Is a Good Gift from God*

TRAINING HELPS

Ask participants to consider how the Bible shows that sex is a good gift from God.

Biblical sexuality honors sex and sexuality as God's good gifts to humankind. Biblical sexuality acknowledges that human beings are made in the image of God, and that human sexual intercourse as designed by God is more than the mere joining of sexual organs, as in the mating of animals. Genesis 1:27–28 says: “So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’” The Bible never separates the act of sex from procreation, though sex does not always produce children. Yet populating the earth by having many children is what God commanded in this text. In addition the security of the marriage covenant will ideally create the environment in which the intimacy of sexual intercourse can be explored and enjoyed by husband and wife.

Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer—may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be intoxicated with her love.

Proverbs 5:15–19

NOTES

2. Sex within Marriage Is to Be Pure and Holy

TRAINING HELPS

Have participants share examples of biblical teaching that sex within marriage is to be pure and holy.

Biblical sexuality is living according to the Bible's principles for sexual purity. The Bible offers both positive and negative instructions for sexual activity. There are behaviors that we are allowed and expected to do, and behaviors that we are to avoid. Because sex is a gift from God, He freely welcomes its use within the freedom of His design and blessing. Biblical sexuality is not "dirty" or something of which we should be ashamed. But just as our sin nature pollutes and degrades every other area of our lives, it pollutes and degrades the sexual act. We must be on guard at all times to remain sexually pure.

"It is God's will that you should be sanctified; that you should avoid sexual immorality....For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life."

1 Thessalonians 4:3, 7

You ask, "Why?" It is because the Lord is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.

Has not the one God made you? You belong to him in body and spirit. And what does the one God seek? Godly offspring. So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth.

Malachi 2:14-15

3. Sex within Marriage Images God in the World

TRAINING HELPS

Have participants share how sex within marriage images God in the world.

Biblical sexuality is a means of imaging God the Creator. The first attribute of God that we see in Scripture is that of Creator of the universe. The Bible is also clear about God's participation in the *ongoing* creation of human beings in their mothers' wombs: "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb" (Psalm 139:13). Therefore, when a husband and wife engage in sexual intercourse and God opens the woman's womb, they become *co-creators with God* of a new human life. The wife provides the egg, the husband provides the seed, and God Himself provides the "watering" of that new life! What an astounding blessing! A pastor once said, "When a new human life is created, the whole universe is changed because something has come into existence which did not exist before and will exist forever." Just as God created the universe out of nothing, so does He create each new human soul. Husband and wife provide the elements of the child's physical body, and God creates the soul. This apparently happens at the moment of conception.

NOTES

Why Did God Create Sex?

TRAINING HELPS

Before introducing this section, you can suggest that participants consider why God created food. Food is primarily to nourish and sustain our bodies, but God has also made eating pleasurable. After the participants have considered food, they can then answer this question: “Why then did God create Sex?”

The purpose of a husband and wife having sex is both procreative (to produce children) and unitive (to become one flesh). Sexual intercourse is a wonderful and creative gift from God. He means for this activity to be repeated again and again and again. He designed both male and female in such a way that the two may physically join together and become “one flesh” when they lay with one another to have sex.

In general, God has wisely attached pleasure to the activities that are good for us to do: eating, drinking, sleeping, having sex, etc. In cultures where food is plentiful, eating is pleasurable, but pleasure is not the primary *purpose* of eating; nourishing our bodies is the purpose of eating. Sleeping is pleasurable, but pleasure is not the primary *purpose* of sleeping; renewing our bodies is the purpose of sleeping. Having sex is pleasurable, but pleasure is not the primary *purpose* of having sex; procreation and bonding is the purpose of sex.

Just as men and women often misuse eating, drinking, and sleeping—by being gluttonous, drunken, or lazy—so they often misuse sex: using it solely for pleasure or to bond with someone other than their spouse. In order for men and women to receive the full blessing that God intends to give through sexual intercourse, it is important for them to use it in a manner consistent with God’s design: to bring about new life and to bond with one’s spouse. Even though a man and a woman are two separate beings, God has created them to be joined in marriage as one body in the most intimate connection human beings can experience.

NOTES

Men and Sexuality

TRAINING HELPS

Have participants consider how sexuality is different between men and women in their culture. Some discussion questions: What behaviors and roles are expected for a man and what is expected for a woman? Would they say that is a biblical perspective? Where do they think these perspectives originated?

Men are designed and tasked to lead, guide, serve, and protect their families, and to model *moral, godly behavior*. When men are obedient to fulfill their God-given role, then all the Earth is blessed. Wives will feel loved and secure, and they will be encouraged to become the women of God that He intended them to be. Daughters will feel loved and protected, and they will have no need to find security in arms other than their fathers'. Sons will be brought up under an example of godliness and—because they want to be like their fathers—are more likely to grow up to be godly men. Godly men have the greatest impact on their wives, daughters, and sons, and consequently have an immeasurably positive impact on our society and culture.

When men reject their God-given role, however, every aspect of life—from the family to the culture to the government—begins to go wrong. It should be no surprise then that Satan's most effective strategy in undermining the family, and society, is to neutralize men. His goal is to scatter the sheep by taking out the shepherds: men. And throughout history the most effective weapon in his arsenal to disarm men has been the misuse of sex. A man who is unprepared to deal with sexual temptation is a man who is in great danger of falling into sexual sin. A man who is carrying around with him the baggage of unconfessed, unforgiven sexual sin is also a man who is not likely to be waging spiritual warfare.

NOTES

Women and Sexuality

After God created Adam, the first man, He said that it was “not good that the man should be alone,” so God created a woman: Eve. *This was the only time that God said something was “not good” within all of His Creation.* God created Eve to be a companion, helper, and source of strength to Adam. God also created men and women to be attracted to each other. One of the strongest initial attractions of a man to a woman is her appearance, and one indication of our Heavenly Father’s infinite creativity is the fact that different cultures and people groups find different physical features attractive! Wives are free to enjoy this attraction from their husbands—to be desirable and alluring (just read Song of Songs!). But for men other than their husbands, women are responsible to maintain modesty—both in appearance and in behavior. While women are not responsible for the thoughts and desires of men, they should honor men by choosing not to be stumbling blocks to them by presenting themselves as objects of lust.

God created men and women to complement each other, and the primary *physical* way in which a man and woman find completion is through the act of sexual intercourse. But women and men must take care to recognize these natural and proper desires and to respond to each other in a God-honoring—and other-honoring—way. The consequences for failing to honor God’s design include sexual sin, broken hearts, unplanned pregnancy, and—ultimately—abortion.

Women are created with a God-given need to be beloved and desired. Little girls love to be told by their fathers that they are pretty, and women want to know that their husbands treasure them. It is critical to recognize that some girls and women are so driven by this need that they will sometimes offer sexual favors in exchange for physical affection and words of desire from men. God cherishes His daughters so much that He sent His Son to die for them. And God intended men—fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons—to honor women deeply and to cherish them as precious.

Some cultures never acknowledge God’s amazing design for *women’s* sexual pleasure; they go so far as to mutilate women’s genitals to prevent this God-given delight. At the opposite extreme are cultures which foster the expectation that women will enter marriage with previous sexual experience. We learn from Scripture, however, that neither of these positions is consistent with God’s design for sexual expression within marriage. We can rejoice that we have a Heavenly Father who designed women’s bodies, minds, and spirits to be *one* with their husbands in a way that brings *mutual* joy and pleasure.

NOTES

Part 2: Unbiblical Sexuality

When we enter into marriage, it is important to realize how the damage caused by earlier sexual sin can inhibit intimacy and bonding within marriage. If a husband or wife's identity, emotions, or spiritual authority have been damaged by sexual sin, these wounds are almost certain to become harmful to the marriage in the future. Believers who have engaged in sex sins prior to or during their marriage—or who have been damaged by the negative modeling of a parent—bring the uninvited, damaging elements of guilt, shame, and fear into marriage.

Distortions and Misuses of Sexuality

TRAINING HELPS

Ask participants to quickly form groups with 4-5 people in each group. Give groups about five minutes to list as many distortions and misuses of sexuality that they can think of.

The nature of sex sins is to pervert everything that is good, right, and true about the procreative and unitive purposes of covenanted marriage sex. Church leaders encounter people inside and outside the church who distort sex and sexuality in various ways, including:

- sex outside of marriage
- rape (forced sexual intercourse),
- pornography (sexually explicit pictures, writing, or other material designed to cause sexual arousal),
- masturbation,
- wife beating and wife battering,
- prostitution (indiscriminate sexual activity for money),
- sex trafficking or slavery,
- incest (sexual intercourse with a near relative),
- sexual abuse (rape, sexual assault, or sexual molestation),
- homosexuality (sexual activity with another person of the same sex),
- exhibitionism (sexual excitement associated with exposing one's genitals in public),
- masochism (sexual excitement from receiving actual or threatened pain),
- sadism (sexual excitement from threat of or administration of pain upon another),
- pedophilia (sexual predation of children), and
- voyeurism (secretively observing sexual activity).

NOTES

What Are the Consequences of Unbiblical Sexual Behavior?

1. Spiritual Impact

TRAINING HELPS

“What spiritual consequences of unbiblical sexual behavior can you identify?”

Satan’s desire is to lead every individual as far as possible from God. He will accomplish this using whatever means possible. Sexual sin is an effective—and destructive—method for separating a person from God. After an individual sins sexually, Satan will use guilt, shame, condemnation, and accusations to hinder repentance and encourage further sin. If the individual has a relationship with God, Satan is pleased to thwart that relationship however possible. If the individual does not know the Lord, the enemy is pleased to hinder his or her future relationship with God. At all times, Satan will seek to tempt the sexual sinner into more sin, ensnaring him or her into a miry pit from which escape can seem impossible.

2. Emotional and Relational Impact

TRAINING HELPS

“What emotional and relational consequences of unbiblical sexual behavior can you identify?”

As image-bearers of God, we were made to love and to be loved. In our hunger for intimacy, sex can sometimes seem like the only way to get the love we desire. However, for those who engage in sexual sin, they may discover that not only does sex *not* help them to find love: it often leads to hurt, estrangement, and broken relationships. Sexual intercourse was designed by God to bind a husband and wife together. Within the permanence of marriage, that bond is strengthened over time through the union found in sexual intimacy. Sexual intercourse in marriage links husbands and wives emotionally and exclusively, and it strengthens their mutual love.

NOTES

The emotional bond formed during sexual intimacy outside of marriage, however, is not protected and regulated by a marriage covenant. This means that when the inevitable difficulties of a relationship arise, one partner is “free” to walk away, leaving the other partner struggling with the woundedness of a broken bond. The breakup of a sexually active unmarried couple can be devastating enough that the wounded parties may withdraw or build walls to protect themselves from hurt in a future relationship. After the end of a sexually intimate relationship, the man or woman may struggle to avoid the comparison of a present partner with a past partner. Additionally, the partner of a person who has been sexually active in the past may also struggle with comparison to his or her partner’s previous sexual partners.

Another risk for sexually active unmarried couples is that sexual activity can easily become the focus of the relationship. It can become a substitute for communication, non-sexual bonding, and companionship activity. Sexual activity can also create an impression of deeper intimacy than may actually exist in the relationship. The man or woman may believe that since they are having sex, he or she is deeply known by the other when, in fact, true relational intimacy may not be present. The only intimacy may be physical, sexual intimacy.

3. Physical Impact

TRAINING HELPS

“What physical consequences of unbiblical sexual behavior can you identify?”

Pregnancy

According to God’s design, a primary purpose of sexual intercourse is procreation. Therefore sexual intimacy often naturally results in pregnancy, whether or not it is planned or desired. If pregnancy is undesired, it follows that sexual intercourse should be avoided. However, because people want to experience the intimacy and pleasure of sexual intercourse without the natural consequence of pregnancy, contraception is increasingly used to prevent pregnancy. Except in the case of most sterilizations, birth control is not 100% effective, and pregnancy often occurs contrary to a couple’s desires. Consequently, the couple is left with the decision of whether or not to keep the child or have an abortion.

TRAINING HELPS

Complete exercise 2.

NOTES

Sexually Transmitted Infections

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are infections from disease-producing microorganisms that you can get by having sex with someone who has an infection. These infections can be caused by bacteria or viruses. STIs caused by bacteria include chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis. These infections can be cured with antibiotics if the treatment begins early enough. STIs caused by viruses include hepatitis B, herpes, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and the human papilloma virus (HPV). Viral STIs cannot be cured, but their symptoms can be managed with medications. The appendix at the back of this manual provides further explanation about the symptoms of these STIs.

STIs are usually spread through vaginal intercourse, but they can be passed through oral sex, anal sex, or skin-to-skin contact, including mutual masturbation (touching someone else's genitals and then touching yours). Most often these microorganisms invade a person's body through the exchange of body fluids (semen or vaginal discharge) secreted during sexual activity. Other infections are transmitted through skin contact with the open sores or warts of an infected person. Occasionally, STIs can be transmitted in nonsexual ways such as through casual contact, by sharing needles used for injections, or from an infected mother to her baby during pregnancy or delivery. Once a germ is transmitted from one person to another, it can cause disease.

There are more than 25 infections that are commonly transmitted through sexual activity. In marriage, between partners who have no sexual history with others, there is zero risk for contracting a sexually transmitted infection. Outside of marriage, however, the risk of contracting an STI rises exponentially with the number of sexual partners. The only way to totally avoid sexually transmitted infections is to engage in sexual intercourse exclusively with one's husband or wife, assuming that person is also free of infection.

NOTES

Part 3: How to Live Sexually Pure and Holy Lives

TRAINING HELPS

Ask participants how do they teach others to live sexually pure and holy lives? How effective has this been? What do they think should change so we can be more effective in helping others live sexually pure lives?

God wants His people to live sexually pure and holy lives; this is His moral will for everybody. We must renounce our former lives of sin and live according to the Spirit. “Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God” (Romans 8:5–8). We must also repent and receive God’s forgiveness for our sins—sexual sins included. The Bible says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

1. Honor marriage

According to God’s Word, marriage deserves great respect: “Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral” (Hebrews 13:4 ESV). “No adultery” is part of our moral obligation to God—both for married and non-married people, and Jesus said that one who has even looked at another person lustfully has committed adultery (Matthew 5:28). Committing adultery defiles the marriage bed and destroys the marriage bond. Adultery also damages relationships within the family between parent and child.

2. Flee from Sexual Immorality

Our world offers a wide range of sexually immoral enticements, often within our own homes; there is no shortage of ways to defile our bodies. The Bible says, “The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body...Flee from sexual immorality” (1 Corinthians 6:13b–18a). Notice the action of the verb that the apostle Paul uses to describe how we should respond to sexual immorality: we must *flee* from it. *Flee* means to run away, to take flight, to move swiftly. Paul doesn’t tell us merely to turn our heads or close our eyes or keep our hands to ourselves. He tells us to run away!

NOTES

3. Take Every Thought Captive to Christ

After fleeing from sexual immorality, we must build a wall against sin by taking every thought captive to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5). Job says in the Bible that he “made a covenant with [his] eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman” (Job 31:1). This should be our model for sexually pure living: to make a covenant with the Lord to avoid all forms of sexual immorality. Also remember always that while man pays attention to outer appearances, God looks at the heart. He will not be concerned with the words you may use in regards to sexual immorality; he is concerned with your commitments (1 Samuel 16:7). In other words a man’s *honorable words about marriage* will mean nothing in the light of his *adulterous actions* behind closed doors. Commit every thought to the Lord and He will provide you with the strength and fortitude you will need to avoid sexual sin. “Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things” (Philippians 4:8).

Conclusion

Biblical sexual integrity is the primary way to prevent the offense against God of sexual immorality as well as to prevent abortion. In order to be the men and women of God we were designed to be, and lead in the issues of sexual integrity and the protection of human life, we must first be willing to submit ourselves to Christ. We need *heart* transformation as well as *behavior* modification, and only through Christ can our hearts be changed. Only in complete submission can we be the humble leaders God intended us to be. We must not only know *about* Christ, we must truly *know* Christ. And when we truly know Christ, and know His mind, we can truly emulate Him. We can know Christ by spending time with Him in prayer, studying His word in community, and doing what he tells us to do. And it is through knowledge of Him, and relationship with Him, that we will become better able to identify and defend ourselves against Satan’s attempts to use our God-given sexual urges to set traps that would otherwise ensnare and defeat us.

Review Questions

1. What is the natural purpose and result of sexual intercourse?
2. What is the result of men and women fulfilling their God-given roles within a marriage and family?
3. What does God have to say in the Bible about sexual immorality?
4. What are some consequences of engaging in sex outside of biblical guidelines?
5. What are steps one can take to maintain personal sexual purity?

NOTES

Appendix: Biblical Sexuality

Exercise 1: ROLE-PLAY (10 minutes)

Objective: Explain the section “What is Sex” to participants in a simple, non-threatening way.

Set-up: This role-play will have two characters: a parent and his or her 12 year-old child. Arrange two chairs for the “parent” and “child” to have a discussion. Another teacher should play the role of the child if possible. If no other teachers are present, ask a participant **before this session** if they would be willing to play that role.

Instructions: This role-play is a model of how a parent could talk with their child about God’s design for sexual relationships. The “parent” could start by asking the “child” if they’ve talked about this topic in school or with friends and ask them what they know. (Following the role-play the facilitator could also lead a discussion with participants about the need to build open, trusting relationships with their children so they have the confidence to be honest with them). After the “child” responds, the “parent” can then explain the topic as described in “What is Sex” including:

- How God created all things good including sexual relationships.
- What is sexual intercourse and its purpose.
- Using clinical terms describe the act of sexual intercourse as described in this section.
- God designed sexual intercourse for both human reproduction and to be pleasurable for both the woman and the man.
- Was designed for expression only within marriage (Gen 2:24)
- It is a profound, intimate way to “know” your husband or wife. (Genesis 4:1 and Luke 1:34).
- Sex is more than physical; it is spiritual, emotional and relational.

Exercise 2 (20 minutes)

STI Exposure Activity

1. Before the session begins, privately ask one participant to intentionally not participate in the activity.
2. Each participant is given a note card. One of the notes has a small red dot placed in the corner.
3. Explain to the participants that they should move all around the room and ask four people to write their names on their card. They will have three minutes to collect the names of four people.
4. After each participant has four names, ask everyone to sit down.
5. Ask the participant with the red dot to please stand up. Once that person is identified explain that the red dot represents an STI.
6. Ask that person to read the names on his or her card. As people are called they should stand up.
7. There will be five people standing. Ask the seated participants to stand if they have any of those five standing people on their lists.
8. Repeat this until all but the person who did not participate are standing.
9. Ask participants: "If the red dot represents an STI, what do you think the purpose of this exercise is?"
10. It becomes obvious that if you have multiple sexual partners, you not only have sex with that person but with everyone else that person has had sex with and whomever those people had sex with and so on.
11. The facilitator then brings up to the front of the room person who didn't participate in the activity.
12. Ask the group what the significance of this person not participating is.
13. "This person abstained from having sex. This person has a 100% guarantee that he or she will not be affected by any type of STI or risk the chance of becoming pregnant since this person abstained from having sex."

STI Transmission

Ask: How are Sexually Transmitted Infections contracted?

Allow them to discuss the ways that people in their culture believe that STIs are transmitted. Even though during the discussion you may hear some beliefs that are not based in fact, it would be best to let them share openly; do not individually correct any mistaken beliefs. After the discussion, you can then direct learners to the facts about STIs and how they are transmitted.

Ask: What specific STIs they know of. You can list them on a board.

Ask: Do you know what the two main classifications of STIs are? (bacterial and viral)

Create a classification chart like the one below and allow participants the opportunity to say if they are bacterial or viral as you write them in.

Bacterial	Viral
Chlamydia Gonorrhea Syphilis	Hepatitis B Herpes HIV HPV
Curable with antibiotics if treated early	Cannot be cured

Some of the Most Common STIs and Their Symptomsⁱ

Caused by Bacteria

Chlamydia. No symptoms may occur at first or at all, especially in women. Later symptoms for women may include itching around the vagina, a yellow, odorless discharge from the vagina, pain during sex, and needing to urinate often or having pain when urinating. Women may also have bleeding between periods or dull pain in the pelvic area. Symptoms for men may include pain or burning when urinating and a watery, milky-colored discharge from the penis.

Gonorrhea (or “GC”). Men may have a thick, yellow discharge from the penis and pain when urinating or may have no symptoms. The opening of the penis may be sore. Gonorrhea doesn’t cause symptoms in most women. When symptoms do occur, women may have white, green or yellow discharge from the vagina, pain when urinating, spotting between periods, or heavy bleeding during periods. Sometimes fever and abdominal pain occur. Gonorrhea can cause sore throats in people who have oral sex or can cause pain in the anus in people who have anal sex.

Syphilis. Early signs include a chancre (a painless, red sore). The sores may appear where you were touched during sex, including your genitals, anus, tongue and throat. The glands near the chancre may swell. A few months later, you may have a fever, sore throat, and headache, not feel hungry or have joint pain. A scaly rash may appear on the palms of your hands and the soles of your feet. After these symptoms pass, you may not have any symptoms for a number of years. When the symptoms return, the infections can affect the brain, spinal cord, and skin and bone.

Caused by Viruses

Hepatitis B. Symptoms may include muscle aches, fever, tiredness, loss of appetite, headache and dizziness. As the disease worsens, you may have dark urine, loose, light-coloured stools, yellow eyes and skin, and tenderness in the liver area (just below the ribs on the right side). Hepatitis B can be fatal if it leads to liver failure or liver cancer.

Herpes. Symptoms start with tingling or itching around your genitals. Small blisters may form in the area and then pop open. When this happens, you might feel burning, especially when urinating. The sores then turn to scabs. During the first outbreak, you might have swollen glands, fever and body aches. But some people don't have such obvious symptoms. Outbreaks may occur for the rest of your life, but usually become less frequent and less painful with time.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). HIV is the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome). It weakens your body’s ability to fight off disease. As your body’s immune system weakens, illnesses begin to develop until you can no longer fight them off. Symptoms may take years to develop and may include unusual infections, unexplained fatigue, night sweats and weight loss.

Human Papillomavirus (HPV). HPV may cause a growth of soft, flesh-colored warts around the genital area or on the cervix. The warts are painless, but may be bothersome because of the way they look. Sometimes the virus causes warts that can’t be seen by the naked eye. There is a link between some types of HPV and cancer of the cervix; this is why pap smears are so important.

NOTES

¹ Material in this section on most common STIs and their symptoms are taken and adapted from "Types of STIs," STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections) - Common STIs and tips on prevention, College of Family Physicians of Canada, <http://www.cfpc.ca/english/cfpc/programs/patient%20education/sti/default.asp?s=1>.

Human Reproduction

“For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother’s womb.”

Psalm 139:13

The Learner Will:

1. Summarize, using their own words, the female anatomy, the male anatomy, the menstrual cycle, and how pregnancy begins.
2. Define ovulation, implantation, and fertilization.
3. List two or three fetal milestones that document life at the earliest stages and describe how they might explain them to another person.

Key Points

- God creates human life in the womb; children are a blessing.
- Human life begins at the moment of conception, when the male sperm fertilizes the female egg; a new, unique, fully human life begins before the fertilized egg implants into the wall of the uterus.
- God is sovereign over conception and fetal development, so no child is ever “unplanned” or “unwanted” by God.
- The act of sexual intercourse results in the physical, emotional, and spiritual union of a husband and wife.
- The sex of a human being formed at conception is determined by the sperm.
- Each human being formed at conception is a distinct person, separate from his or her mother.
- The decision of a married couple to limit their number of children (with or without the use of birth control) is a moral and spiritual decision, as well as a practical one.

Scripture References

Psalm 139:13, Deuteronomy 28:4, 11, Psalm 127:3–5, Isaiah 40:11, Genesis 1:27–28, Matthew 1:20, Isaiah 49:1, Psalm 139:13–16a, Psalm 127:3–5a, Mark 10:13–14, 16, Psalm 82:3–4, Psalm 139:13–16a, Genesis 5:1, James 3:9, Genesis 29:31, Ruth 4:13, Jeremiah 1:5, Luke 1:41–44, Psalm 51:5, Genesis 25:21, Galatians 1:15a, Luke 1:24–25, Genesis 22:17, Genesis 9:1, Mark 9:42, Romans 5:8, Deuteronomy 10:18

TRAINING HELPS

Recommended time for this session: 3 Hours

This session includes:

Theology of human life

Human reproduction

Fetal development

Practice time with flipchart

Methods used for birth control

Explanation and practice time teaching CycleBeads

Part One: The Theology of Human Life

The World's View of Pregnancy

TRAINING HELPS

Discussion questions:

How does a couple in your culture typically react when they find out they are pregnant, after planning to have a child?

Is the mother's reaction different from the father's?

What kinds of celebrations, traditions, or rituals are associated with pregnancy?

Are these traditions the same for a girl as they are for a boy? How are baby boys treated differently from baby girls?

If the reaction for a **desired** pregnancy is excitement ("We're having a baby!"), how do people react if the baby is **unexpected** and **unwanted**?

In the world's view, pregnancy is often seen as a positive or a negative thing based on whether or not a child is wanted. If a child is *unwanted*, then a pregnancy is seen as a crisis—and the child is often destroyed by abortion. If the child is *wanted*, then the pregnancy is seen as a cause for rejoicing. The child is a human being in both cases; only our perspective toward the child is different.

This view allows for a situation in which a woman, for example, can abort her *unwanted* 25-week old child, while another doctor in the same facility is frantically striving to save the life of a premature *wanted* child born at 25 weeks. In some countries a person can even be charged with *two* counts of homicide for killing a pregnant woman and her preborn child, even though that same woman could have been on her way to have a *legal* abortion.

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The Biblical View of Pregnancy

TRAINING HELPS

Discussion questions:

How do you think God feels about a pregnancy?

How do you think God feels about a baby girl versus a baby boy?

At what point in the pregnancy does God begin to value human life? (Review from the Sacredness of Human Life chapter)

The biblical view of pregnancy stands in sharp contrast to the world's view. God is in control of the timing and continuation of pregnancy, whether or not it is planned or "wanted" by the parents. *The biblical view of pregnancy says that whether or not a child is wanted by his or her parents has no actual bearing on the child's worth.* For parents to "choose" the death of a child through abortion is simply not morally permissible, because they are placing themselves in the role of God.

Unlike the world's view of an unwanted child as a burden upon the parents, the Bible clearly calls children a blessing from the Lord (Deuteronomy 28:4, 11; Psalm 127:3–5; Isaiah 40:11). Of course there are very real and significant challenges faced by the parents of an unplanned or unwanted preborn child; these must be addressed with compassion and empathy. But the circumstances of pregnancy should not result in the devaluation of the innocent preborn child.

What the Bible Teaches about Pregnancy and Children

TRAINING HELPS

Instead of just reading the included material for each of the following points, it can be helpful to have participants read the included passages and discuss their impressions of what each verse is saying about the Bible's teaching on pregnancy and children.

God creates life. Pregnancy is His process for creating more humans in His image.

Pregnancy is a gift to humankind and the only way for us to fulfill God's plans for humans to fill the earth and rule it on His behalf. From the moment a person is created at fertilization (also known as conception), he or she is created in the image of God. Though sin has distorted humankind, we still bear God's image.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth. . . ."

Genesis 1:27–28

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The preborn child is fully human.

In Matthew 1:20 (NASB) , an angel refers to the preborn Jesus as a **child**: “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.” The prophet Isaiah stated about himself: “The Lord called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named me” (Isaiah 49:1) Furthermore, God has a plan for each preborn child’s life, including knowing the length of his life and his specific purpose.

All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

Psalm 139:16

God is sovereign over conception and oversees fetal development.

God creates every child. He supervises every preborn child’s development, and He knows each preborn child intimately.

For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother’s womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; Your eyes have seen my unformed substance.

Psalm 139:13–16a

Children are a blessing.

While children may require lots of time and energy, and bring challenges to a family, they are a blessing from the Lord. In fact, in Bible days, Hebrew women who were barren were considered to be cursed.

Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them.

Psalm 127:3–5

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God values all children, in and out of the womb.

God loves and values people at all stages of life, including the preborn and infants. Jesus Himself spent nine months in Mary's womb, experienced birth, and grew from infancy to adulthood. During Jesus' ministry on earth, He intentionally interacted with children, even when His disciples thought it was best to send them away. He used one child's lunch to feed a crowd of thousands. He went out of His way to heal children, free them from demons, and even raise them from the dead. Jesus did not treat children as a distraction but used them as an example of faith and welcomed their God-given affection and enthusiasm. Also, Christ died for the sins of all the people who would believe in Him, including children and adults of every nation. The value of the life of God's one and only Son was the price paid to redeem sinners, which shows how much God values people.

People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these"...And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

Mark 10:13–14, 16

We are to protect children, both in and out of the womb.

When we protect born and preborn children, we are imitating God, who is a defender of the defenseless.

Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

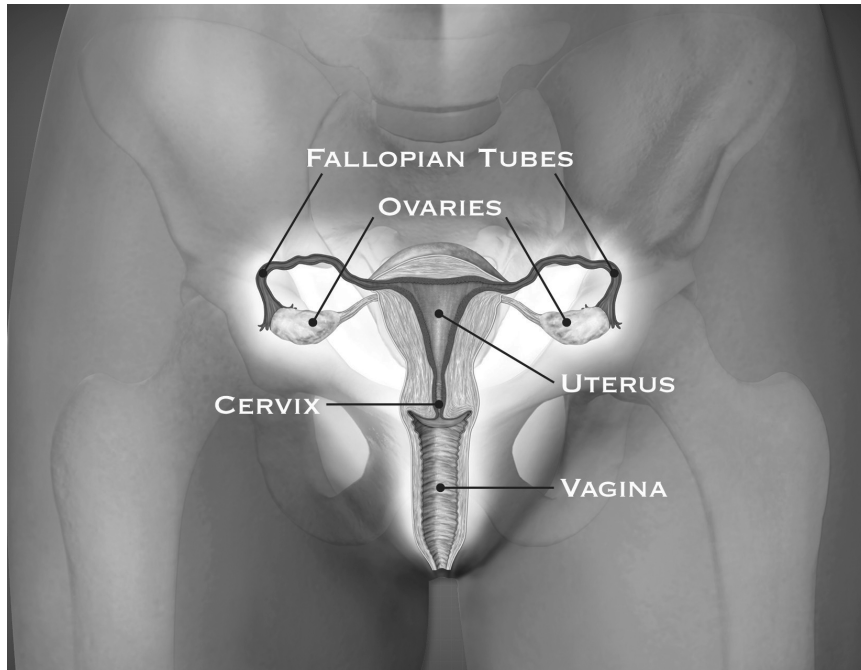
Psalms 82:3–4

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Part Two: The Miracle of Human Procreation

The act of sexual intercourse results in the physical, emotional, and spiritual union of a husband and wife. That union has the capacity to become flesh through the creation of a new child—a tangible symbol of the bond between husband and wife. For a man and woman to partner with God in the creation of a new life through sexual intercourse is a monumental gift, and it is a miracle. At the moment of conception, a unique human being—body, soul, and spirit—comes into existence. Never before has one existed like this person and never again will another exist like this person. Human beings are the pinnacle of God’s earthly creations because we are made in His image.

Female Reproductive Anatomy



The Vagina

The *vagina* is the elastic muscular canal in a human female that extends from the *vulva* (the external genital organs) to the *cervix*, the lower, narrow portion of the uterus.

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The Uterus

The *uterus*, also referred to as the *womb*, is hollow and shaped like an upside-down pear. The average adult uterus is about 7.6 cm (3 in.) long, 5.1 cm (2 in.) wide and 2.5 cm (1 in.) thick. It is located in the lower pelvic region between a woman's hips. At the bottom, the *cervix* opens into the *vagina*, which leads into the exterior of the female reproductive system. At the top, the uterus is connected to the *fallopian tubes*, which lead to the *ovaries*. The uterus is the home of a preborn child. The walls of the uterus are composed of muscles and are therefore capable of expanding with the growth of the child. These muscles also contract and push the baby downward during labor and delivery.

The Ovaries

The *ovaries* are located in the pelvis on each side of the uterus. Each ovary is about the size and shape of an almond, about 4 cm (1½ inches) long. The ovaries have two functions: they produce eggs and *hormones* (natural chemicals). These hormones control female body characteristics (breasts, body hair, body shape, etc.) and help to regulate the menstrual cycle and pregnancy.

The Egg (or Ovum)

Eggs (ova) are produced by the ovaries in a female prior to birth. At birth, a female has all of the eggs she will ever possess; her body will not produce more. Each egg is a single cell and each egg possesses 23 chromosomes—one half of the woman's DNA, or genetic code. These chromosomes contain all of the mother's genetic information, which combines with the father's genetic information when a sperm fertilizes the egg at conception.

The Fallopian Tubes

Two *fallopian tubes* are attached at the top on either side of the uterus and have finger-like projections that reach out toward the ovaries. They serve as passageways through which eggs travel from ovary to uterus.

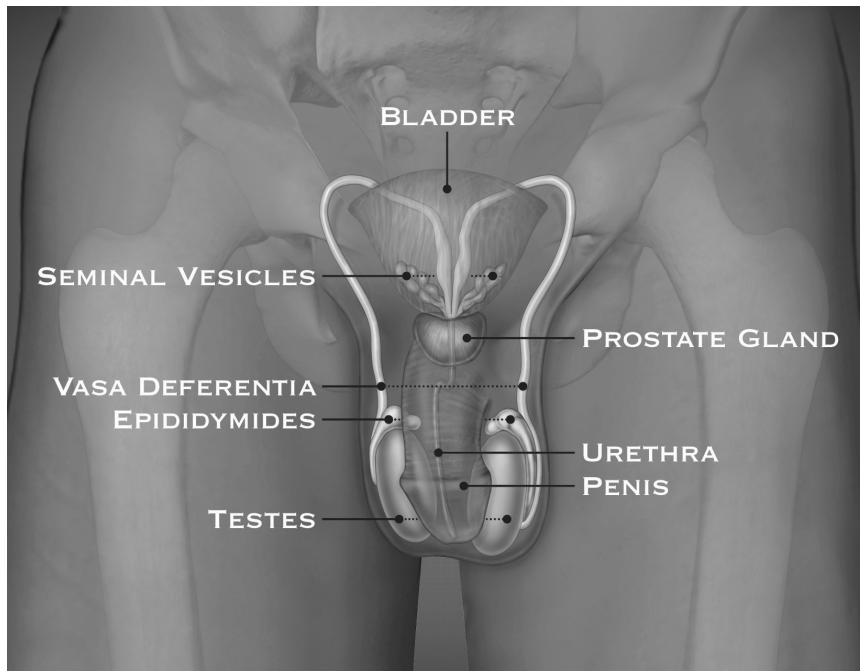
The Menstrual Cycle

Each month, the *pituitary gland*—a master gland in a woman's brain—sends out a series of hormones to start, balance, and coordinate her entire reproductive system. These hormones stimulate the ovaries to release one of the 40,000+ eggs which have been present since birth—far more than will be needed during childbearing years. Hormones also thicken and prepare the lining of the uterus (*endometrium*) for a potential pregnancy.

Pregnancy triggers additional hormones, which tell the uterus to maintain its ready state, and prepare it to nourish a new life. If pregnancy does not occur, the uterus will shed its blood-filled lining and pass it out of the body during *menstruation*. This discharge of blood through the vagina continues for an average of three to seven days. This cycle is typically repeated once a month. It varies from woman to woman, with an average cycle spanning 26 to 32 days, depending on her body and other influences.

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Male Reproductive Anatomy



The Penis

The penis is the external male sexual organ. In addition to functioning as the primary reproductive organ in a sexually mature male, the penis also acts as a conduit for urine to leave the body.

The Testes

The testicle (plural *testes*) is the human male sex organ. The testes produce *sperm*, the male reproductive cell that joins with the female ovum to form a zygote, the earliest form of human life. In a male who has reached sexual maturity, the two testicles produce and store millions of microscopic sperm cells. The testicles are oval-shaped and grow to be about two inches (5.1 cm) in length and one inch (2.5 cm) in diameter. The testes are contained within the scrotum, an external pouch of skin lying below the penis.

The Epididymis

The epididymis is a single, narrow, tightly coiled tube that connects each testicle to its vas deferens. After sperm are produced in the testes, they mature in the epididymis until they are released during ejaculation.

The Vas Deferens

The vas deferens is a tube that connects each epididymis to the urethra and transfers sperm from the testes during ejaculation.

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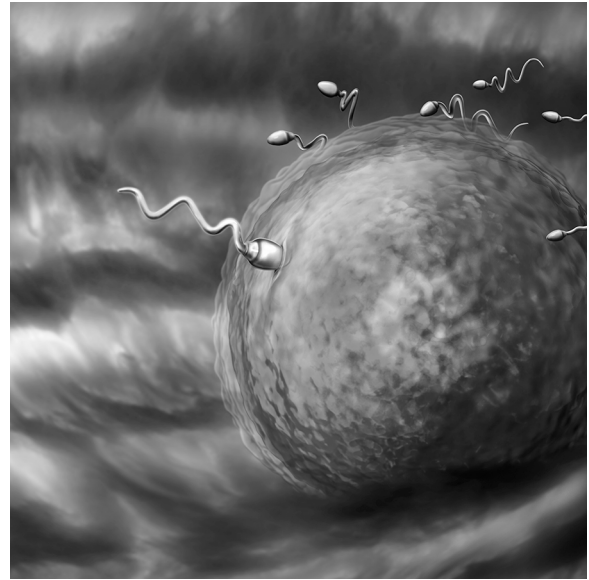
How Human Life Begins

About two weeks after a woman's menstruation begins, an ovary releases an egg. This is called *ovulation*. The egg travels into the fallopian tube where it waits to be fertilized by a sperm. During sexual intercourse, the man's penis is engorged with blood and becomes erect. At the point of sexual climax, called *orgasm*, muscles in the penis will contract and powerfully eject the sperm into the woman's vagina in a process called *ejaculation*. Millions of sperm are released from the man's penis into the woman's vagina and swim through the cervix and uterus and into the fallopian tubes, aided by cervical fluid (mucus).

Out of the initial *millions* of sperm cells, only *hundreds* will reach the egg. These sperm cells all surround the egg and try to penetrate the outer layer in order to fertilize it, but only one will succeed. Once a single sperm unites with the egg by penetrating its outer layer, the egg undergoes a chemical change that prevents penetration by any additional sperm. This process is called *fertilization*, or conception. The woman is now pregnant.

When a sperm penetrates an egg, the genetic material (called deoxyribonucleic acid or DNA) from each parent combines to create a unique human being called a *zygote*. This is a distinct living organism, completely unique and separate from its parents. (Even the child's blood type is often different from its mother's.) The 23 chromosomes from each parent have united and created a 46-chromosome human being. *Every detail of the child's development—sex, eye color, hair color, fingerprints, and more—is determined at this point.*

This single cell begins to double immediately—from one to two to four to eight cells, and so on. As the zygote grows, it travels through the fallopian tube and makes its way to the uterus over a period of two to five days. On day five or six, the zygote—a tiny human—may implant in the lining of the uterus and continue to grow. The zygote, now called an embryo, will burrow into the lining of the uterus, which will nourish the new life until the later development of the placenta, which will support the life of the child until birth.



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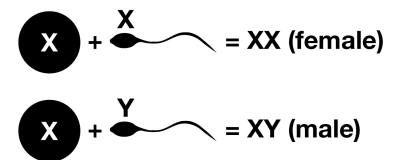
Ectopic Pregnancy

Roughly 12 percent of embryos will fail to implant. Also a fertilized egg will occasionally implant in the fallopian tubes or elsewhere in the abdomen. This is called an ectopic (or tubal) pregnancy, and it is an extremely dangerous situation for a woman and the developing zygote. As the embryo grows, it will eventually rupture the tube that contains it. This can cause severe bleeding and endanger the mother's life and certainly cause the child's death. Without medical intervention to remove the fallopian tube (along with the embryo within it), certainly one individual—the child—and possibly two people—both mother and child—are going to die. Surgery to remove an ectopic/tubal pregnancy does result in the loss of a human life, but *this is not the same as having an abortion* because the purpose of the surgery is to save the life of the mother, not to end the life of the child. It is important to understand that *the child of an ectopic pregnancy cannot possibly survive*.

How the Baby's Sex Is Determined During Fertilization

Within a human being's 46 chromosomes, two are sex chromosomes, each designated as X or Y. For a female, these two chromosomes are X + X. For a male, these two chromosomes are X + Y. Prior to conception, each reproductive cell (the *ovum* in a female and the *sperm* in a male) carries a *single* sex chromosome, which then combine with each other to create the XX or XY pairing.

Every ovum carries a single *female* X chromosome; every egg is therefore “female.” Each individual sperm cell carries *either* a single female X chromosome or a single male Y chromosome. Therefore, each sperm is either “female” or “male.” ***The sex of the new human being formed at fertilization is determined solely by the sperm.*** If the sperm that fertilizes the ovum is carrying an X chromosome, the resulting person will be *female* (X + X). If the sperm that fertilizes the ovum is carrying a Y chromosome, the resulting person will be *male* (X + Y).



Because many people do not understand these biological facts, women are often held responsible for the sex of the baby that is conceived, because they are the ones who bear the children. Men who are displeased that a girl-child was conceived instead of a boy-child, for example, should not hold the woman responsible. And even though it is the sperm that determines the sex of the child, it would be a mistake to believe that men have control over the determination of the baby's sex. They do not. Remember: *millions* of sperm cells are released in a single ejaculation, and every sperm cell carries *either* a single female chromosome *or* a single male chromosome—***not both***.

We must all remember that God is involved in the creation of each human life: male and female. Each of us is made in the image of God: male and female. God is the divine creator of every human being, male and female, and He values and loves every person equally.

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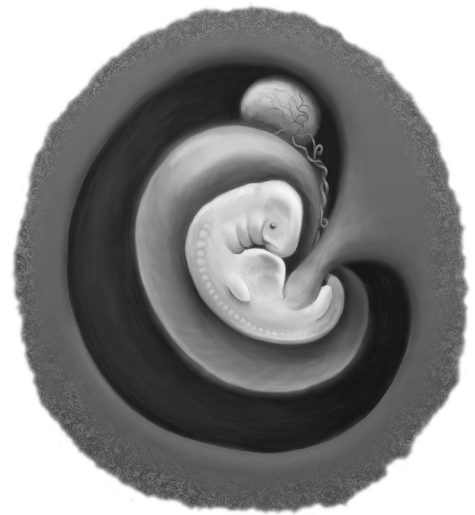
Part Three: Human Fetal Development

To say that a baby in the womb is a “part” of the mother is incorrect. It is a distinct, living human being who is developing within the mother. It is not “potential” life—it *is* life—and it possesses great potential. Understanding the biological process of human fetal development helps us to appreciate the miraculous nature of the creation of life, and to encourage worship of God, the Creator of all life.

In many cultures, pregnancy is generally dated by “gestational age,” in which day one of pregnancy is the first day of the woman’s last menstrual period (LMP). Ovulation and fertilization generally occur around day 14, or two weeks, of pregnancy. By the time the woman’s period is late, and she suspects she may be pregnant, the newly formed child is considered to be about “five weeks” old, even though fertilization actually took place only three weeks ago. The term of a pregnancy is measured in three trimesters: first, weeks 1–13; second, weeks 14–26; and third, weeks 27–40.

Four Weeks (One Month)

Most organs and body structures have begun to form, including the brain and spinal cord, the heart, the stomach and intestines, bone tissues, eyes, and ears. Though she is already a mother, the woman does not yet suspect that she is pregnant. The child’s heart will begin to beat in just a few days.



Eight Weeks (Two Months)

The embryo’s heartbeat can now be heard on sonogram, and blood cells are circulating throughout the body. All of the major organ systems are now forming. Basic facial features appear and arms and legs continue to grow. Though unfelt by the mother, the embryo’s body and limbs begin to move.

- The embryo now possesses over 90 percent of the structures found in adults.
- The umbilical cord is now visible.
- There is reflexive response to touch and primitive brain activity can be measured.
- Ovaries and testicles begin to form.
- Lungs are present.
- Taste buds, tooth buds, and eyelids appear.
- The forehead is large and the external genital organs differentiate into female or male.
- The outer ears have begun to take shape.



Twelve Weeks (Three Months)

The embryo is now known as a fetus, and she may soon start sucking her thumb. All essential internal organs are formed and functioning. One of the functions of the placenta, which is now completely developed, is to provide nutrient-rich, oxygenated blood to the child's body. This nourishing blood circulates through the vein and arteries in the umbilical cord connecting the child to the placenta.

- The kidneys are producing urine.
- The head rounds out and comprises half the size of the fetus.
- Bone formation is now underway in most bones.
- Eyelids close to protect the eyes.
- The genitals are differentiated.
- The brain now controls muscle movement, as seen by yawning and sucking.



Sixteen Weeks (Four Months)

The child's movements can now be felt by the mother, as the child's physical activity grows increasingly vigorous. By late in the pregnancy, not only can the child's movements be felt externally, they can be seen as the growing child twists and turns in an increasingly confined space. Instead of being curled inward, the child's head is now more erect than it has been. Her eyes have moved closer to the front of her face, and her ears are close to their final position. Millions of eggs are now growing in the fetal ovaries, and a uterus is present. When this little girl is born, her body will contain all of the eggs that it will ever produce, and they are being produced now—five months before she is even born!

- The child's mouth makes sucking motions and she has begun to swallow amniotic fluid.
- Tooth development is now underway.
- The skin is still mostly transparent.
- Swallowing and chest movements are present.
- The liver and pancreas have begun to function.
- The child's head and body take their proper proportions.
- The heart is now beating 110–180 beats per minute and pumping 23.7 liters (25 quarts) of blood every day.



Twenty Weeks (Five Months)

Even though this fetus has been a unique human being since the moment of her conception, a significant outward form of that distinction can now be seen in her unique fingerprints and toe prints. Downy hair known as lanugo can be seen, and vernix, a waxy cream, coats and moisturizes the baby's skin. The child will likely have established waking and sleeping cycles by this point, and she may have even found a favorite position in which to slumber. Now that the baby's genitals are mostly formed, an ultrasound can reveal the baby's sex. And since all body structures and systems are now in place, most of the baby's energy will go toward gaining weight.

- Some studies have concluded that the fetus is capable of feeling pain at this stage.
- The skin becomes less transparent as fat begins to deposit.
- The child begins to punch and kick more vigorously, and the mother feels it!
- Eyebrows and eyelashes have appeared.
- Blinking and frowning reflexes have developed.
- The child can now suck her thumb.
- While the lungs have not developed enough to permit survival outside of the womb, breathing-like movements become regular.
- Buffered in amniotic fluid, the child can fully turn from side to side and front to back.



Twenty-Four Weeks (Six Months)

The child's ears can now perceive sounds from outside of the womb, and loud noises may even startle her! And though the mother can't hear her, the child's vocal cords are now active. If you were to peek into the womb through ultrasound, you'd be able to see her squinting, smiling, and frowning. The child has now reached a point where she could survive outside of the womb if given intensive care. The youngest child known to survive preterm birth was not even 22 weeks old; she was born barely halfway through pregnancy!

- Eyes are fully functional.
- Eyebrows and eyelashes are almost fully formed.
- Rapid brain growth continues.
- Lungs are developing rapidly.
- Rapid eye movement, which is associated with dreaming, can be measured.



Twenty-Eight Weeks (Seven Months)

If you put your ear to a pregnant woman's abdomen, you may be able to hear the baby's heart beating. And even though the child's lungs are not yet fully developed, she would have a good chance of survival if she were born at this stage. Many babies are in breech position at this stage of pregnancy, which means that they are positioned feet- or bottom-first, instead of the typical head-down birth position. There is still plenty of time for the baby to change position, however, and most babies will rotate within the next few weeks.

- Brain-wave patterns are similar to those of a full-term baby.
- Though she won't cry until she's born, her eyes can now produce tears.
- The child's brain now controls her "breathing" movements and body temperature.
- Eyelids are opening and closing and the child's eyes can perceive light.
- The child is getting her exercise through acrobatic kicks and stretches.
- More fat is deposited and the child's skin is smoothing out, losing its wrinkles.



Thirty-Two Weeks (Eight Months)

The baby's movements will soon grow less acrobatic as she settles into a head-down birth position. Most of the skin wrinkles will have disappeared from her face. By the time she is born eight weeks from now, her present weight will have more than doubled!

- Though the lungs are not yet mature, rhythmic "breathing" is occurring.
- Even though the bones are fully developed, they are still pliable and soft.
- The baby's skin has thickened.
- Fingernails and toenails have grown to the tips.
- The baby's head may now be covered with hair.



Thirty-Six Weeks (Nine Months)

The child has probably rotated into birth position by now, with her head pointed downward in the mother's pelvis, where she'll stay until she's born. This shift will likely allow the mother to breathe more easily, but because the baby has settled lower onto her bladder, the mother may need to urinate more often. The extra fat that the baby is putting on—about half a pound a week—will help her to regulate her body temperature after she is born. Her body weight at birth will be about 15 percent fat.

- The eyes are open during alert times, and closed during sleep.
- The child will notice light and turn toward a light source.
- The child's outer ears are now fully formed.
- The child can now grasp firmly.



TRAINING HELPS

Following this explanation of fetal development have participants get into pairs. Allow 10 minutes for the first person to explain human reproduction and fetal development using the flipchart. After 10 minutes have partners switch allowing the other participant to practice for 10 minutes. After both have had opportunity to practice teaching get the attention of the group and ask them how they felt with the presentation and if they have any questions.

NOTES

Part 4: Family Planning

For Christian married couples, the decision to limit their number of children, or space out the birth of their children, must be seen not only as a practical matter, but as a *moral and spiritual* decision to make as they prayerfully seek to do God’s will in life.

A human being in the image of God is formed at fertilization/conception, at the moment when a sperm unites with an egg. At this moment God joins the genetic material from the mother and the father to create a unique, new human being at the moment of conception. By the time of implantation (when the embryo implants into the wall of the uterus), the human has been alive for several days. Therefore if a family-planning method *prevents implantation* of this unique human being, an early abortion has been caused. This is called an *abortifacient*, or abortion-causing, effect. Several of the contraception methods listed below are suspected of doing this.

TRAINING HELPS

Ask **participants** what forms of birth control or family planning methods they have heard of. Which are being used in their nation?

Five Primary Forms of Contraception (Birth Control)

1. *Barrier Contraceptives*—Prior to sex, the male or female erects a physical barrier to block sperm from reaching the egg. Condoms and diaphragms are two examples of barrier contraceptives.
2. *Intra-Uterine Device (IUD) or Spiral*—A small, often T-shaped device, containing either copper or hormones, is placed inside the uterus. The emissions from the IUD can either inhibit sperm mobility, thereby preventing conception, or they can thin the uterine lining, thereby preventing implantation of a zygote.
3. *Hormonal Contraceptives*—At regular intervals, the female takes a chemical hormone to inhibit ovulation, thereby preventing pregnancy. It is possible, though believed to be rare, for “breakthrough ovulation” to occur while a woman is taking hormonal contraceptives. This means that even while the woman is taking hormonal contraceptives, an egg can be released and fertilized. If this happens, there are two possible outcomes. The zygote (“fertilized egg”) may fail to implant in the uterus because the artificial hormones in the birth control have made the uterus unable to properly nourish the embryo. Another outcome is that the zygote may implant into the uterus and the pregnancy may continue. Birth control pills (“the Pill”) and Depo-Provera, an injection, are two examples of hormonal contraception.
4. *Emergency Contraceptives*—Up to five days after intercourse, hormonal (chemical) intervention can be used to inhibit ovulation or make the uterine lining inhospitable to a fertilized egg. If fertilization occurs, and the contraceptive prevents implantation, an early abortion will result. Plan B and ella are examples of an emergency contraceptive. Plan B emergency contraceptive pills contain the hormone levonorgestrel—a common ingredient in certain birth control pills.
5. *Natural Family Planning and Fertility Awareness*—The husband and wife work together to keep sperm from entering her body during the fertile season of her cycle, generally by avoiding sexual intercourse on those days. Symptothermal Method and the Standard Days Method (CycleBeads) are two examples of natural family planning.

NOTES

TRAINING HELPS

If you are asked directly whether or not a particular birth control method is *right/wrong, moral/immoral, or biblical/unbiblical*, ask participants if a fertilized egg is being destroyed. Let them discuss the ramifications of the answer.

The Standard Days Method® (SDM) of Family Planning

SDM is a simple, modern, fertility awareness-based method of family planning that was developed and tested by the Institute of Reproductive Health in 2001. Based on reproductive physiology, SDM identifies a fixed set of days in each menstrual cycle when a woman can get pregnant if she has unprotected intercourse. If the woman does not want to get pregnant, she and her husband avoid unprotected intercourse on days 8 through 19 of her cycle. A woman can use CycleBeads®, a color-coded string of beads, to help track the days of her menstrual cycle and see which days she is most likely to get pregnant. SDM/CycleBeads are easy to use and have no side effects, and the method appeals to those who are concerned about side effects, or concerned about the possible abortifacient mechanism of other methods of contraception.

Conclusion

Pregnancy and the process of fetal development remind us that we are “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14). God is the one who has fashioned each preborn child, and His amazing creativity and attention to every detail give us a glimpse of His heart toward us as His creation. We can see in his consideration of us—and through his formation of us in His image—that He values us more highly than any other living being on the Earth.

You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—and how well I know it.

Psalm 139:13–14 NLT

Review Questions

1. How does the world’s view of pregnancy differ from the biblical view of pregnancy?
2. What are the primary parts of the female reproductive anatomy? Male?
3. Define ovulation, implantation, and fertilization. Explain how pregnancy begins.
4. List two or three fetal milestones that document life at its earliest stages and describe how you might explain them to another person.
5. What is your personal belief about birth control? Why do so many people want to be in control of the capacity to conceive children?

NOTES

Appendix: Additional Scriptures About Pregnancy and Children

“This is the written account of Adam’s family line. When God created mankind, he made them in the likeness of God.” *Genesis 5:1*

“With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God’s likeness.” *James 3:9*

“When the LORD saw that Leah was not loved, he enabled her to conceive, but Rachel remained childless. *Genesis 29:31*

So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When he made love to her, the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son.” *Ruth 4:13*

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” *Jeremiah 1:5*

“When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.’” *Luke 1:41–44*

“Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” *Psalms 51:5*

“Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. The LORD answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant.” *Genesis 25:21*

“God...set me apart from my mother’s womb and called me by his grace...” *Galatians 1:15a*

“After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. ‘The Lord has done this for me,’ she said. ‘In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people.’” *Luke 1:24–25*

“I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore.” *Genesis 22:17*

“Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.’” *Genesis 9:1*

“If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea.” *Mark 9:42*

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” *Romans 5:8*

“He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving him food and clothing.” *Deuteronomy 10:18*

Abortion Procedures

“Rescue those being led away to death;
hold back those staggering toward slaughter.”

Proverbs 24:11

The Learner Will:

1. Recognize how abortion is an offense against God and against the preborn child.
2. Describe the methods, side effects, and risks of abortion.

Key Points

- Abortion is the deliberate, violent, and unnatural destruction of a living human being.
- Chemical abortions are induced through the use of drugs that are usually taken in pill form, though injections are sometimes used.
- Surgical abortion is a form of abortion in which the embryo is removed from the uterus using surgical methods.
- Many alternative methods of abortion are performed outside of the recognized medical establishment.

Scripture References

Proverbs 24:11, Exodus 20:13, Deuteronomy 19:10, Proverbs 6:16–17, Jeremiah 7:30–34, Proverbs 24:11; Psalm 82:3, Deuteronomy 30:19–20a

TRAINING HELPS

Recommended time for this session: 60 minutes

It will be of extreme importance to begin this session with prayer. Learning the details of the destruction of life through abortion can be oppressive. Pray against any attacks from the enemy, and pray for clarity of thought and sensitivity to God’s Spirit for how participants could be affected with this information. Always remember and remind participants that God has forgiven all sins, including the sin of abortion.

The Offense of Abortion

Because God highly values each human life, and is involved in the creation of every individual, abortion is a great offense against God and against the preborn child. God prohibits the killing of innocent people, which includes preborn babies (Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 19:10; Proverbs 6:16–17). The killing of children is particularly detestable to God and invites His wrath (Jeremiah 7:30–34). God also calls us to be rescuers of those who are being killed (Proverbs 24:11; Psalm 82:3).

What Is Abortion?

TRAINING HELPS

Discussion questions:

What is abortion?

How would you define the word abortion?

Abortion is defined as the ending of a pregnancy by the removal or expulsion of an embryo or fetus from the uterus before it is able to survive independently. **Spontaneous abortions** are most commonly known as miscarriages, in which an embryo or fetus dies as the result of natural or accidental causes. An abortion is considered an **induced abortion** if it is brought about deliberately and intentionally.

In spite of varying laws regarding abortion, ranging from highly restrictive to highly permissive, abortions are performed in every nation in the world. In highly developed countries, abortion may be heavily regulated, though legal, and typically performed within the medical establishment. In other countries, where abortion laws are highly restrictive, or where medical care is particularly expensive, abortions may be more commonly performed outside of the medical establishment.

Abortion Procedures

TRAINING HELPS

Ask participants what abortion methods they have heard are being used in their nation.

As participants mention the different abortion methods they know of you can write them down on the board creating three categories (Chemical, surgical and alternative). Encourage them to think of as many as possible but there is no need to go into detail on them yet. Only list their ideas on the board and continue with the content that follows.

NOTES

There are three primary categories of induced abortion: **chemical** (also known as medical), **surgical**, and **alternative** methods. A chemical abortion is a non-surgical procedure in which pharmaceutical drugs are used to bring about the death of the embryo. A surgical abortion is a procedure that removes the embryo and placenta from a woman's uterus. A third category, alternative abortion methods, consists of oral abortifacients, foreign bodies inserted into the uterus, and/or the application of external force to the pregnant woman's body.

Chemical Methods

Chemical abortions are induced through the use of drugs that are usually taken in pill form, though injections are sometimes used. These medicines work in various ways to bring about the death of the growing embryo or fetus. Medicines that result in the death of an embryo or fetus are known as **abortifacients**.

There are three primary drugs that are used to perform medical abortions, **mifepristone**, **misoprostol**, and **methotrexate**. Mifepristone is the generic name of a drug that is known throughout the world as RU-486, Mifeprex, or Mifegyne. Misoprostol is the generic name of a drug that is known as Cytotec. Another drug less commonly used for medical abortion, methotrexate, is generally administered in conjunction with misoprostol.

Chemical regimens will vary by country and by region. Some of the drugs that are used for abortion are often widely available at a low cost, which may encourage some women to self-administer, with or without the involvement of a physician, or another individual such as a midwife.

Side effects of any chemical abortion include pain, cramping, vaginal bleeding, nausea, headache, dizziness, chills, hot flashes, shivering, fatigue, vomiting, diarrhea, chills, and fever. Complications include infection, excessive bleeding (hemorrhage) requiring transfusion, incomplete abortion (tissue remaining in the uterus), ongoing pregnancy requiring surgical abortion, and—rarely—death.

Surgical Methods

Surgical abortion is a form of abortion in which the embryo is removed from the uterus using surgical methods. The four primary methods of surgical abortion are vacuum (or suction) aspiration, dilation and curettage, dilation and evacuation, and instillation (or saline) abortion. Another method, called dilation and extraction, is used rarely.

During pregnancy, the cervix is tightly closed unless the woman is in labor. In order to gain access to the uterus during any surgical abortion, the cervix will need to be dilated (or made wider) through the use of medical instruments or drugs.

After cervical dilation, the various methods of surgical abortion all require the use of various instruments to remove the living embryo. Early-term abortions may only require a suction device, called an aspirator, which is used to empty the uterus. Later-term abortions will require additional tools, such as a forceps and curette, in order to dismember the growing embryo. Vacuum aspiration is often used as the last stage of any surgical abortion in order to ensure that all fetal remains and tissue have been removed from the uterus.

NOTES

Side effects of surgical abortion often include pain and cramping, vaginal bleeding, diarrhea, and the nausea and vomiting generally associated with anesthesia use. Complications include infection, excessive bleeding (hemorrhage), cervical injury, uterine perforation, and incomplete abortion.

Another surgical procedure, known as instillation (or saline) abortion, is a procedure in which a chemical solution is injected through the abdomen of the pregnant woman into the amniotic sac, the membranes that surround and protect the developing fetus. Because the fetus inhales, ingests, and is surrounded by amniotic fluid at all times, the fetus draws in the chemical solution that has been injected into the amniotic sac and is poisoned. The solution will also burn the fetus' skin. (The most commonly used solutions for these procedures include saline, hyperosmolar urea, and synthetic prostaglandins.)

Instillation abortions, though increasingly rare, are generally performed in the second and third trimesters. They have become highly uncommon in developed countries because other generally available procedures present fewer risks to the mother.

Alternative Methods

There are several methods of abortion that are performed outside of the recognized medical establishment for various reasons: availability, cost, legality, cultural and familial views of abortion, etc. These methods of abortion may be self-induced, in which the procedure is performed by the pregnant woman herself. They may also be performed by another individual (who may or may not have any medical training) such as a midwife, relative, or friend.

There are three primary categories of alternative abortion: oral abortifacients, foreign bodies inserted into the uterus, and application of external force. As with any abortion procedure, pain, cramping, and vaginal bleeding can be expected. Complications include infection, excessive bleeding (hemorrhage) requiring transfusion, cervical injury, incomplete abortion, and ongoing pregnancy. Many of these abortion methods are extremely dangerous and create severe risk to the health and life of the pregnant woman. Many of the herbal and chemical preparations are toxic in nature and directly poison the woman. Foreign bodies inserted into the uterus can lead to cervical or uterine trauma and severe infection, and, by definition, external force causes direct and often severe trauma to the pregnant woman's body.

NOTES

Oral Abortifacients

Oral abortifacients are generally herbal or chemical preparations that the pregnant woman will ingest in order to induce labor. These preparations work by stimulating contractions of the uterus, and/or softening the cervix, leading to menstruation and expulsion of the developing embryo. Herbal preparations include the use of dong quai (*angelica sinensis*), pennyroyal, cotton root bark, tansy (mugwort), black cohosh, juniper, rue (*ruta*), ginger, celery seed, birthwort, and vitamin C in high quantities. Chemical preparations include bleach, turpentine, and acid.

Foreign-Body Abortion

There are two primary results of inserting a foreign body—such as a cassava root, stick, wire, knitting needle, thorn, or chicken bone—into the uterus. One result is the puncture of the membranes that surround and protect the developing embryo. When these membranes are punctured, the embryo will likely die, and the woman's body will expel the dead embryo. Another outcome is that after the membranes are punctured, the foreign body is used to pierce the embryo itself and cause its death directly—which will also result in the woman's body expelling the dead embryo.

Application of External Force

Various forms of external force have been used to induce abortions, to varying degrees of effectiveness, for thousands of years. Intense physical exertion has been believed by some cultures to bring about a miscarriage. More direct action—such as punches, blows, or kicks to the abdomen of the pregnant woman—has also been used, even to the point of the pregnant woman throwing herself down stairs in order to induce labor. Abdominal massage of the pregnant woman is another method, during which an individual compresses, constricts, and kneads the abdomen of the pregnant woman in order to kill the developing embryo and initiate uterine contractions.

NOTES

Conclusion

Whether or not they are legal in any particular country, abortions are commonly performed all around the world. While some people are more vulnerable than others to abortion, due to their circumstances, it is important to understand that abortion remains a tempting, if not attractive, choice for millions of women and men facing an unwanted or unexpected pregnancy. We must be prepared to defend responsible sexual behavior within marriage and also be prepared to help those who have been wounded by practicing their sexuality outside of God's moral limits.

This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life...

Deuteronomy 30:19–20 NLT

TRAINING HELPS

End with prayer asking forgiveness on behalf of all mankind for the destruction of life. Pray for redemption and healing. Pray for the Church to respond in obedience in defending the life of the pre-born. Pray that God will reveal to each one present what action He is calling them to take.

Review Questions

1. What is induced abortion?
2. What is the primary difference between chemical and surgical methods of abortion?
3. Describe some of the physical, emotional, and spiritual risks of abortion.

NOTES

After Abortion

“You, LORD, the desire of the afflicted;
you encourage them, and you listen to their cry.”

Psalm 10:17

The Learner Will:

1. Identify the possible long-term effects of abortion in a person’s life.
2. Understand the spiritual truths that are at the root of an abortion decision.
3. Recognize the biblical path to restoration after an abortion.

Key Points

- The ripple effects of abortion (beyond the death of the child) are far-reaching and affect the parents, the immediate and extended family of the aborted child, the church, the community, and more.
- Abortion can affect every area of life—physical, spiritual, emotional, and relational—for the woman and man who have participated in an abortion decision.
- God knows about all sin, including abortion, even if it has taken place in secret. He stands ready to forgive the sin of abortion and heal its wounds.
- Confession, repentance, and forgiveness of others are critical steps on the path to restoration from abortion.

Scripture References

Psalm 10:17, John 10:10, Psalm 103:8–11, Matthew 6:6, 1 John 3:20, Psalm 34:18, Psalm 10:17–18, Exodus 15:26, Psalm 103:3, Psalm 103:2–5, 12–14, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ezekiel 36:26, 1 John 1:9, James 5:16, Matthew 6:14–15, Colossians 3:13, Ezekiel 18:32, Lamentations 3:32–33, 2 Peter 3:9, Acts 17:30, 2 Chronicles 7:14

TRAINING HELPS

Recommended Time for this session: 90 minutes

It will be important to begin this session with prayer, asking God to open our eyes and hearts to hear His voice as He reveals the areas in our life that need healing and restoration. As you are teaching this session it is very important to maintain an awareness of how the Holy Spirit is moving in the hearts of men and women. Even though time for prayer will be given during the next session on “Repentance, Forgiveness and Healing” it is likely that participants may feel more open to expressing their feelings and confessing to one another while the men and women are still in separate groups. You should feel free to allow time for confession among the participants during this session.

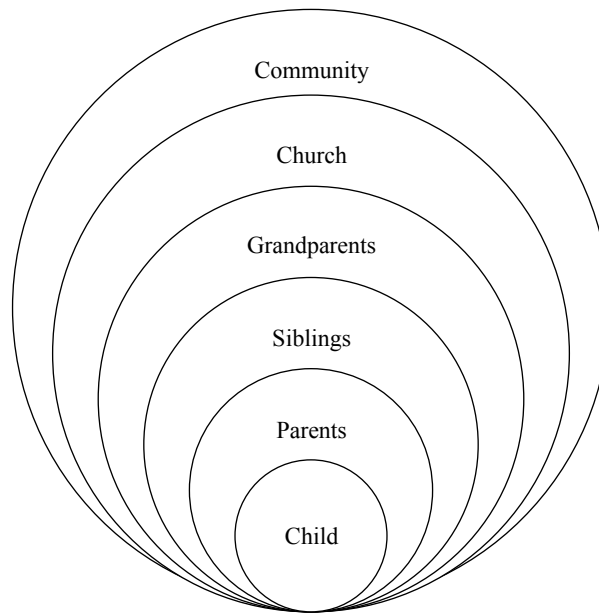
Abortion is the deliberate and unnatural destruction of an unborn child, and the act of abortion violates the created identity of the child's parents. Instead of being one who nurtures, the mother is now one who has ended a life. Instead of being one who protects, the father is now one who abandons.

Every person connected to an abortion has experienced loss. This loss looks different for each person, and it may or may not be accompanied by *recognizable* physical, emotional, or relational symptoms.

TRAINING HELPS

The concentric circles on the next page illustrate the broad impact of abortion. Working with a partner sitting next to them, participants can look at the illustration and simply list the ways that each of the listed people is affected by abortion. After acknowledging that the greatest loss is suffered by the aborted child—who loses his or her **life**—have participants take about one minute to list the effects of that loss on each of the other five people/groups: parents, siblings, grandparents, church, and community. Following this five-minute exercise, volunteers can share some responses with the large group, and you can record their answers on the board.

NOTES



The Ripple Effects of Loss After an Abortion

Obviously, the aborted child loses the most: his or her life. The mother loses a child, along with all of the enriching experiences of motherhood. While a father will never experience pregnancy and birth in the same way as a mother, he too loses much when his child is aborted, including the rewards of fatherhood and raising a child. Siblings of the aborted child—both present and future brothers and sisters—lose the opportunity to share their lives and experiences in a deeply profound way. Grandparents of the aborted child, even those who may have contributed to the decision to abort, lose much, including the heritage made possible only through having children and grandchildren.

The ripple effects of abortion are far-reaching, even at the times when they remain unfelt by the participants, many of whom may never know what they have lost. Yet there is hope for the man and woman who have aborted their child, and it is a hope greater than the deepest guilt or regret that a person can face. God knows all about that person's abortion decision: the circumstances, the details, and the pain. He plans to take the very thing that Satan intended for evil and use it for good. And although restoration will take time, God promises healing, forgiveness, and hope for those who have been impacted by abortion and reach out to Him for redemption. The knowledge of restoration after an abortion is a critical message that must be offered to those who have aborted their children. Abortion is not the end of the story. In fact it can be a new beginning!

NOTES

The Effects of Abortion

Learning about the long-term effects of an abortion may be the first step in a woman or man's road to healing. A woman who desires to have children may not know that her infertility was caused by a past abortion. A man may not understand that the distance he feels between himself and God is directly related to his participation in abortion. A mother who has aborted her child may not have made the connection that some of the emotional and relationship difficulties she is presently experiencing have their roots in her abortion. When women and men hear about the post-abortion problems that others have experienced, they often recognize the same struggles in their own lives.

Physical Effects

In addition to the immediate side effects of abortion, some effects appear long after the abortion has taken place. Trauma to the uterus during an abortion can lead to future fertility problems, including miscarriage and difficulty in conceiving a child. It is very important to understand, however, that miscarriages do occur for other reasons that are completely unrelated to induced abortion. So while an induced abortion may contribute to the future risk of miscarriage, *not all miscarriages are caused by a past abortion.*

Also, many international studies have linked induced abortion with breast cancer. These studies suggest that abortion abruptly stops cell development and interrupts the natural process of breast maturation, in which breast cells are protected against cancer when allowed to fully develop through a full-term pregnancy. According to these studies, abortion may remove the protection against breast cancer that is gained through carrying a pregnancy to term. However, other studies have failed to find a link between abortion and breast cancer.

TRAINING HELPS

Remind participants that a person could be living with a sexually transmitted infection for years and not even know it. It may take years before any outward symptoms can be seen. In the same way, the spiritual, emotional, and relational effects of abortion may not be visible for many years, even though the person may need healing.

1. After a brief explanation of the physical effects of abortion, divide the participants into three groups. Once in their groups explain that they will have five minutes to write a list of non-physical ways that abortion affect us.
2. Group 1 should write a list of **spiritual** effects; Group 2, **emotional** effects; and group 3, **relational** effects. (Prior to this session you can prepare large sheets of blank paper that can be used by each group.)
3. After about five minutes, a representative from each small group can present their lists to the large group.
4. After each presentation, you can complete the discussion by mentioning other effects that the groups may not have listed.

NOTES

Spiritual Effects

Abortion also includes a willful disobedience of God's word, specifically His command against the taking of innocent life. Taking innocent life—as occurs in abortion—is murder, and it is sin. There are many spiritual consequences for murder, and only God can remove the guilt of having taken a life through abortion.

In the decision to abort a child, the mother and father demonstrate a lack of trust in the sovereignty of God and His decision to give life to an individual in the womb. They also do not trust His capacity for goodness, provision, and protection. After an abortion, the person intuitively understands that he or she has violated this trust and they begin to view God as untrustworthy.

They make an unspoken alliance with Satan who is seeking to kill their child (John 10:10a). He also seeks to destroy the mother and father, disrupt their relationships with one another and their loved ones, devastate their immediate and extended family, and undermine their relationship with God. After he has deceived them into believing that abortion is the “right” choice, and they have aborted their child, he will use their actions to condemn them. The outcome is often separation from God, severe identity damage, and extreme suffering.

Women may at times also be unwilling to abort their children, yet they are coerced (*or even forced*) into abortion by others: the father of the child, their own parents, community or governmental authorities, etc. Moral culpability for abortion in these cases may not be as clearly defined, but the spiritual effects may still be deeply devastating.

Emotional Effects

The effects of an abortion decision have the potential to damage a person's emotional health and well-being. The negative effects on a person's emotions may initially be subtle and not as obvious as the immediate physical effects. Emotional effects can, however, become overwhelming and create lasting wounds if they are not recognized and dealt with. The intensity of a person's emotional reaction after an abortion is often a shock to the individual *as well as* to the people around him or her.

The range of potential emotional issues is wide, and most of these effects are rooted in fear, shame, and guilt. Feelings after an abortion are often handled in one of two opposite ways: 1. They remain repressed and unexpressed or, 2. They are indiscriminately expressed through emotional outbursts. Both extremes create problems, because it takes a tremendous amount of energy to control or hide these “undesirable” emotions, leaving little energy for other things.

Some of the common emotional effects of an abortion decision include:

- Anger
- Shame
- Depression
- Sadness
- Denial
- Anxiety
- Guilt and regret
- Unresolved, persistent grief
- Mood swings

A combination of these emotional effects can sometimes cause an individual's emotional well being to deteriorate so significantly that suicide is considered or attempted.

NOTES

Relational Effects

The most profound relational harm caused by a man or woman's decision to abort their child is the violation and subsequent loss of trust. For a woman, she has violated her God-given role to protect and nurture her child, and her failure to fulfill this role damages her trust in herself. For a man, abortion is a betrayal of his innermost self. By participating in an abortion, a man's choice to neglect the role of protector and provider impairs his trust in himself. Lack of trust then, for both the woman and the man, undermines every relationship and can create great relational damage, such as:

- Sexual dysfunction: aversion to sex, sexual promiscuity, extramarital affairs, homosexuality
- Difficulty maintaining close relationships
- Loneliness
- Lack of bonding with children, child abuse, and child neglect

This lack of trust can extend beyond the boundaries of a woman or man's immediate relationships, such as marriage and family, to include the church and its greater community. It is not uncommon for post-abortive individuals (women especially) to experience diminished trust in *every* relationship—in particular with those in leadership or in positions of authority. This tension and lack of trust can infiltrate churches and communities, all the while being unseen, unacknowledged, or misunderstood. It is crucial for leaders within the church to recognize the far-reaching effects of abortion within their congregations in order to effectively and appropriately respond to the spiritual needs of the people.

While the effects of disobeying the truth revealed in God's Word about the life of the preborn child in the womb bring lasting and sometimes irreversible human consequences, but those who repent from their sins receive God's forgiveness and, over time, can experience substantial healing of their whole person—body, soul, and spirit.

The Path to Restoration From Abortion

Genuine and lasting healing from sin, including abortion, is possible. "The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him" (Psalm 103:8–11).

In order to receive healing from the sin of abortion, we must turn to God for His help. Abortion is first a sin against God before it is a sin against others, including the preborn child whose life is ended. Those who were involved in an abortion decision must renounce their prior agreement with the enemy, who persuaded them that abortion was the only solution for the challenges presented by an unwanted child. *The mother and father must choose to believe in God's truth and align themselves with it.*

The Bible clearly lays out redemptive principles that offer hope and help to the woman who has aborted her child, and to the man who may or may not have participated in the decision.

NOTES

God knows and hears the post-abortive man and woman.

Jesus refers to God the Father as “your Father, who sees what is done in secret” (Matthew 6:6). Likewise, the Bible says, “God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything” (1 John 3:20). He knows exactly what has been done. He knows about the woman’s abortion and the man’s participation, but that’s not all He knows. He knows who was encouraging or pressuring the woman to abort. He knows how the abortionist treated her. He knows why the father did not stand up in defense of his preborn child. He knows the aborted child intimately. God, and God alone, knows everything about this abortion.

God is close to the brokenhearted (Psalm 34:18). If the mother and father of the aborted child call upon God, He will hear them.

You, Lord, hear the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, so that mere earthly mortals will never again strike terror.

Psalm 10:17–18

God wants to forgive and heal the post-abortive man and woman.

God calls Himself the Lord who heals us (Exodus 15:26), forgives all our sins, and heals all our diseases (Psalm 103:3). He desires us to live life to the full (John 10:10); surely that means a life of wholeness, hope, and joy. No sin that has been confessed has the power to ruin our life. Abortion—both the mother’s decision to abort, and the father’s sin to coerce, encourage, or support it—is a sin that God will forgive because of the blood Jesus shed for them. He desires to forgive them, and He desires for them to forgive themselves and others. He also desires to heal them wherever they are wounded. Listen to the Father’s heart for anyone suffering from the consequences of sin, including the sin of abortion.

Praise the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits—
who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion,
who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s. . . .
as far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.
As a father has compassion on his children,
so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him;
for he knows how we are formed,
he remembers that we are dust.

Psalm 103:2–5, 12–14

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

2 Corinthians 5:17

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

Ezekiel 36:26

NOTES

TRAINING HELPS

Have any parents think of times in their lives when their children fought with each other and hurt each other deeply. When children hurt each other, parents are often grieved and will seek to see those relationships restored. Ask participants: “What steps need to be taken for that relationship to be restored and harmony brought back to the family?” List their responses on the board. Once the group has listed their steps to restoration, make the connection to how God seeks to restore and heal us from any offense against Him including the offense of abortion.

As parents of children who are fighting we seek restoration the same way God looks to restore us when we sin:

1. The children **confess** to their parents, as we are to **confess** our sin to God (1 John 1:9).
2. The children **confess** their wrongs to one another, as we are all to **confess** to one another (James 5:16).
3. The children should **forgive** one another, as we are all commanded to **forgive** others (Matthew 6:14-15).

Confession and Forgiveness

Confessing our sin (including the sin of abortion) and forgiving others who were involved are the only necessary steps to be forgiven by God and restored to a right relationship with Him. Once they make the choice to believe God’s Word—that He knows about their sin and is ready to forgive them—post-abortive men and women must follow God’s instructions.

Confess Your Sin to God

1 John 1:9 tells us that “if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” Although the enemy will continue to remind us of our sin, we must learn to live in the freedom of God’s forgiveness. We must reject the ongoing attempts of the devil to condemn us for past sins that God has already forgiven.

Confess Your Sin to One Another and Be Healed

James 5:16 says: “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.” This passage is not merely a suggestion but a mandate. *We are all to confess our sins to each other, pray for each other, and receive healing for our sin.* This confession does not need to be publicized (in front of a large group, for example), but it is important that it be spoken aloud to at least one other person. According to this passage from James, *healing* itself is the purpose and goal of confession.

Forgive Others Who Were Involved

Matthew 6:14-15 says “if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” Post-abortive men and women will likely struggle to forgive if they have not first accepted God’s forgiveness for their own sin. But just as we are commanded to confess our sins to each other, we are commanded to “bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you” (Colossians 3:13).

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Conclusion

Although there are always consequences to our sins, there is also hope. God says, “I take no pleasure in the death of anyone...Repent and live!” (Ezekiel 18:32). The Bible teaches us that though God “brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love. For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to anyone” (Lamentations 3:32–33). His ultimate goal for us is summarized in 2 Peter 3:9. He “is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” Thus “now he commands all people everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30) in order to bring restoration, healing, and wholeness.

Abortion kills babies and affects everyone it touches. And the loss of fatherhood and motherhood is real and profound. However, God is greater than abortion. God says to us today what He said to his people long ago:

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

2 Chronicles 7:14

Our responsibility is to humble ourselves, pray, seek God’s face, and turn from our wickedness, including the sin of abortion. In response, God says He will hear, forgive, and heal. God earnestly desires that we turn our hearts toward Him. There is no wound He cannot heal and no sin He will not forgive, if we turn to Him and ask. By His grace, women and men can find substantial healing in this life and complete healing in the age to come.

TRAINING HELPS

1. Have participants ask God to reveal to them what they need to confess to Him.
2. Allow some time to listen in silence as they wait on God to respond.
3. After a few minutes, invite participants to confess their sins to each other and to God.

Review Questions

1. What are some of the ways that an abortion can affect an individual’s life?
2. Although there may be many *reasons* for a person to choose an abortion, what is the spiritual root of an abortion decision?
3. What are the biblical steps toward restoration after an abortion?
4. What does God say about forgiveness? Is His offer of forgiveness true for the sin of abortion?

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Repentance, Forgiveness, and Healing

“...If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

2 Chronicles 7:14

The Learner Will:

1. Identify the sin of King David and his response to being confronted.
2. Describe the aspects and consequences of sin in the life of a Christian.
3. Review the three steps of repentance.
4. Recognize the believer's role as ambassador for Christ: to usher others into repentance, forgiveness, and healing.

Key Points

- The greatest need of every man and woman ever born is forgiveness.
- The self-centered nature of sin quickly leads believers away from God, into defeat and condemnation.
- Repentance is changing one's attitude toward sin and God. It includes a change of both heart and mind.
- The work of Christ on the Cross has made forgiveness and healing possible for those that repent and turn to Jesus.

Scripture References

2 Chronicles 7:14, 2 Samuel 11:1-27, Acts 13:22, Psalm 51:17, John 3:16, 1 John 3:4, Isaiah 59:2, 2 Corinthians 7:10, 1 John 1:8, Psalm 51, Hebrews 8:12, 1 John 1:9, Romans 3:24, Isaiah 53:5

TRAINING HELPS

Recommended time for this session: 20 minutes for teaching; ministry time as needed

It is likely a transformation is occurring in the hearts of participants. The objective of this session is to invite a time of personal reflection allowing for each individual to examine their heart, recognize any guilt that may keep them from ministering effectively, trust in God's forgiveness, turn from their disobedience, and begin their path to restoration.

The Story of David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:1-27)

One evening, during a spring when the army of Israel was engaged in battle, King David looked out from his roof and saw a beautiful woman bathing. He sent for the woman, Bathsheba, and brought her into his home and had sexual intercourse with her. She later sent a message to King David telling him that she was pregnant with his child.

David sent for Bathsheba's husband, Uriah—a soldier in King David's army—and attempted to persuade him to return to his wife and have intercourse with her, so that David's own sin of adultery might not be discovered. Uriah refused and told King David that he could not, in good conscience, enjoy the pleasure of companionship with his wife while his fellow soldiers were fighting.

David sent Uriah back to the front, and informed his military leader to place Uriah on the front line and withdraw from him, that he might be struck down and killed—which is exactly what happened. Uriah was killed and David took Bathsheba as his own wife, and she bore to David the son that they had conceived together. The prophet Nathan visited King David and told him a parable that convicted David of his heinous sin. King David confessed and repented of his sin, and Nathan told him that God had forgiven him.

In this story we learn that David, who was chosen and anointed by God to be king of Israel, was guilty of coveting, adultery, and murder. These sins were committed by the national *and* spiritual leader of God's chosen people! Even still, David would come to be known as a "man after God's own heart" (Acts 13:22). How can this be? It was because of David's response after being confronted about his sin. While God hates sin, what matters *most* to Him is what we do *after* we sin. David responded correctly to his sin through his repentance. He demonstrated a broken and contrite heart (Psalm 51:17).

In response to King David's repentance, God met the one need universal to all mankind: *forgiveness*. Because God fully understands this need, He was moved to send His Son Jesus Christ to die in our place, by which He provided for the forgiveness of our sins. Forgiveness was—and remains—our greatest personal need, and there is no one capable to meet that need other than our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (John 3:16). And as forgiveness has been offered freely to us, we are commanded to forgive others. Jesus guides us to fully forgive those who have wronged us, and the Holy Spirit empowers us to extend that authentic forgiveness to others.

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Sexual Sins Are Especially Destructive

At its root, sin is a violation of the law of God (1 John 3:4), and breaking God's law leads to separation from Him (Isaiah 59:2). For followers of Christ, there is nothing that leads to greater defeat than the condemnation, confusion, and bondage that come from violating our covenant with God through sin. If we fail to deal with our own sins properly, the damage will be not only to ourselves, but to our spouses, our children, our extended families, our congregations, and our communities.

Sin creates a rift between God and us, and it is *always* personally destructive. Secret sins, especially those of a sexual nature, can be particularly destructive. The sex-obsessed world in which we live has created an environment in which many Christians have at one time been—or *are* presently—slaves or victims of sexual sin. Sexual sin, when left unchallenged, produces guilt that cripples a believer's confidence and authority and keeps us from providing moral leadership.

Sexual sins include extramarital sexual relations, sexual addictions, adultery, pornography, fantasies, sexual abuse, rape, and more. Some of these sexual sins may result in pregnancy, which could further lead to the grave sin of abortion. As a result of these sexual sins, many have been deeply wounded. Many have been victims of a sexual assault such as rape. Some have become pregnant and been forced to have abortions. Some have had an abortion out of lack of knowledge. Some have had abortions because they felt alone, poor, and helpless. Some have been sexually molested from a very early age. Some have been exposed to a misuse of sexuality that initiated a lifetime of sexual addictions or unhealthy behaviors.

TRAINING HELPS

Ask participants to discuss how the story of King David gives hope to the believer who struggles with sexual sin.

The story of King David gives hope to the believer who struggles with sexual sin and its consequences. In his affair with Bathsheba, David lied, committed adultery, and murdered, and yet was forgiven and restored by God. This demonstrates to us that there is no sin beyond the forgiving power and authority of Jesus Christ, who gave His life to provide the penalty due for our sins.

NOTES

Repentance

“Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation...”

2 Corinthians 7:10

Among the things the Lord would do in the Church is raise up a restored and redeemed generation out of the rubble of sexual sin. In order for Him to do this we must first repent. To repent means to change one's attitude toward sin and God. This is a change that must occur in both the mind and the heart. Repenting is more than just regret or remorse. Even Judas Iscariot had a sense of remorse after betraying Jesus, but he remained in sin instead of turning to God. Repentance is also not abstaining from a particular sin for a period of time; it is *completely turning away* from that act of sin. Repentance is not *hiding* our sinful behavior. David tried to conceal his sin, but God exposed it. True repentance requires a right attitude toward sin, a right attitude toward self, and a right attitude toward God.

Repentance consists of three steps:

Step 1: Recognize Your Guilt

First John 1:8 tells us that “if we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.” The first step in repenting involves understanding that we are sinners and that we stand under God's judgment.

TRAINING HELPS

Ask participants to discuss when and how David recognized his guilt, and what he wrote to express that he trusted that God forgave him.

Step 2: Trust That God Will Forgive You

The second step in repenting involves believing that God will forgive us. In Psalm 51, King David wrote, “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions” (verse 1). Repentance is not only acknowledging our sin, it's also recognizing that God is willing and able to forgive our sin. We are promised in Hebrews 8:12 that God will “forgive [our] wickedness and will remember [our] sins no more.”

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Step 3: Turn from Sin to God

Once we realize that we stand guilty of sin before God, and that He is willing to forgive us, we must then come to Him to receive that forgiveness. We come to God the Father through Jesus Christ, who is God the Son. 1 John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” Romans 3:24 tells us that because Christ paid for our sins, we have been “justified freely” through Him, and we now stand innocent before God.

TRAINING HELPS

Ask participants how David demonstrated true repentance.

Forgiveness and Restoration

In the story of King David, it is true that he committed adultery with Bathsheba and had her husband murdered. But instead of remaining a slave to his sin, upon being confronted with the truth David acknowledged and confessed his sin. He repented.

In Psalm 51 David says, “against you [God] and you only have I sinned.” When David acknowledged his sin, God forgave him. *And as He did with David, so will God forgive us of our own sins.* Our pardon and our forgiveness are complete, without limitations. Jesus’ work on the Cross provided for the forgiveness of our sins, and it is the foundation for our complete healing and restoration. Isaiah 53:5 says, “But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.” Jesus’ payment for our sin through His death and resurrection has established our complete redemption, regardless of what has occurred in our past.

NOTES

Conclusion

Your worst mistakes can become your strongest testimony. Nowhere in the New Testament are believers in Jesus called sinners. Instead, we are called saints, ministers, priests, and sons. This is our new identity. We may have been wounded, but we are not worthless. We are priests serving in the Kingdom of God. It is so amazing that the Lord will forgive us after we have disgraced Him so often. This is the greatest miracle of forgiveness: failure is never final with God! No matter how desperate our failures, or how deeply rooted our shame, He is ready to forgive us and is eager to release us into service for Him.

TRAINING HELPS

After the teaching it is important to allow a time for ministering through prayer. This should be done in a way that these participants are accustomed to the most.

There should be opportunity for the following:

Time for testimony of how God is working or has worked in their lives

Time for confession (privately and with another)

Ministering to one another in prayer

A time of anointing these leaders for life-giving ministry (with oil if appropriate)

Time for thanksgiving and rejoicing.

Review Questions

1. What are some of the consequences of sin in the life of a believer?
2. Why can sexual sins be particularly destructive for a Christian?
3. In order to receive forgiveness from God, what action must first take place?
4. What steps did King David take after his sin with Bathsheba in order to be restored?

NOTES

Next Steps

“Then I prayed to the God of heaven, and I answered the king, “If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it.”

Nehemiah 2:4-5

The Learner Will:

1. Have an opportunity for listening prayer. Record and share with others what God has revealed.
2. Design the start of an action plan that will serve as a guide in next steps to be taken following this training.

Key Points

- We must seek God’s heart to discern the plans he has for us and ministry.
- It is important to share and pray with others what we feel God is speaking to us for confirmation and accountability.

Scripture References

Nehemiah 2 & 3

TRAINING HELPS

Recommended time for this session: 90 minutes

Materials Needed

- Large poster paper with planning grid prepared
- Marking pens

Handouts

- Handout 12.1: Small Group Instructions: Next Steps

Introduction for the Facilitator

Open this last session by asking the same three questions you started with on the first day: Is God speaking? If He is speaking, are you listening? If you are listening what is He saying? Tell the participants that they will have time to listen and write down what God is telling them to do with what they have learned.

The Prophet Nehemiah is an example of leadership to be closely modeled. His heart was deeply moved as he identified a real need for his people. When he understood what God was telling him to do he acted in obedience. He devised a plan and immediately took action to fulfill what God had called him to do.

There are many great opportunities for us to attend conferences, trainings, and classes. These provide necessary learning experiences but we may not take the time to consider what God is calling us to do with what we have learned. The greater influence is not in the learning itself, but through what we *do* with what we have learned,

The journey of a life-giver, which each of us is on, is just the beginning. You have been challenged throughout this training to listen to God's voice, asking Him what he is calling you to do. Like Nehemiah we must respond in obedience. We need to follow this prophet's example:

1. **Listen:** Take time to listen to God and identify what He is calling us to do with what we have learned.
2. **Obey:** Respond obediently by thinking through *how* we can accomplish what He has called us to do.
3. **Act:** Immediately take the next steps putting God's plan into action.

If Nehemiah had written out his plan it may have looked something like this:

What?

Rebuild the walls of Jerusalem

Nehemiah 2:1-5

How?

1. Ask permission and support from the King.
2. Inspect the walls.
3. Organize the workers.
4. Begin rebuilding

Nehemiah 2:7

Who?

Detailed list of all those involved.

Nehemiah 3

Where?

Detailed account of which workers were responsible for which part of the rebuilding.

Nehemiah 3

When?

The specific date is not recorded but the Bible indicates that Nehemiah did give the King a set time. God is speaking. We must listen. We must respond in obedience to what He has called us to do.

Nehemiah 2:6

TRAINING HELPS

Complete exercise 1 (see appendix at the end of this chapter)

NOTES

Appendix: Next Steps

Exercise 1

Listening to God (5 minutes)

1. Explain that they will spend five minutes in silent, listening prayer. Ask them to get out some paper and pen to have on hand while they are listening to God.
2. Instruct participants to write down any impressions from God to minister with the message of life in their nation (or beyond). What exciting things has God been nudging them towards during the past days? Even if they are not sure if these impressions are from God, they can write them down for further reflection and prayer.
3. Allow there to be complete silence for five minutes as each participant listens and writes.

Designing a plan (45 minutes)

1. After the time of silence split the participants into four or five groups (or groups no larger than eight people) and asked them to share with one another anything that the Lord may have been speaking to them.
 - It is often very helpful if to work with the host beforehand to organize who will be grouped together. The host may want to do it by region, by church, by denomination or by ministry. Some affinity between group members will be helpful as they develop an action plan. This could encourage them to hold one another accountable or even work together in the future.
2. Once individuals have had the opportunity to share with their groups what God revealed to them in their silent listening ask them to spend time in prayer together.
3. After encouraging one another in prayer ask them to consolidate their lists into ONE group action plan. They do not have to include everything on each individual's list but the group should be in agreement with what is placed in the plan. Action plans should be ministry items rather than for personal.
4. These plans should include:
 - WHAT God has called them to do
 - HOW he is calling them to do it
 - WHO they are being called to serve
 - WHERE they are being called to serve
 - WHEN will they accomplish this?
5. Explain that they should write out their plans on the large sheets of paper they have been provided.
6. Each group should appoint a representative to present their plan.

Presentation of Plans (30 minutes)

1. Ask each group's representative to share the plan they came up with. It will be helpful for group representatives to share their plan in about five minutes.
2. To conclude, ask the host to pray a blessing over the plans.

HANDOUT 12.1: Next Steps Small Group Instructions

You have 30 minutes for this exercise.

1. Share with one another what the Lord may have been speaking to you. How is He calling you to respond to this issue?
2. Pray as a group, “spurring one another on to good deeds.”
3. After sharing your individual lists work together to design ONE group action plan.
 - This consolidated plan does not have to include everything on each individual’s list but the group members should be in agreement with what is placed in the plan. The consolidated plan should be ministry items rather than personal.
4. Design your action plan using the large sheets of paper provided.

Here is an example of how the plan could be completed for Jeremiah’s task to rebuild the wall:

WHAT?	HOW?	WHO?	WHERE?	WHEN?
Rebuild the wall	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ask permission and support from the King.2. Inspect the walls.3. Organize the workers.4. Begin rebuilding	Nehemiah, Eliashab, Zakkur, Sons of Jericho, Etc...	Sheep Gate, Next to the Sheep Gate Etc...	Jan. 15 20 th Year of Artaxerxes

Your group’s action plan should include:

- WHAT is God calling you to do
- HOW is he calling you to do it
- WHO are you being called to serve
- WHERE are you being called to serve
- WHEN will you accomplish this?