

SESSION 7

VALUE ALL

PROVERBS 24:10-12

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

MARK 10:46-49

⁴⁶ They came to Jericho. And as He was leaving Jericho with His disciples and a large crowd, Bartimaeus (the son of Timaeus), a **blind beggar,^g** was sitting by the road. ⁴⁷ When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to **cry out,^h “Son of David, Jesus,ⁱ have mercy on me!”** ⁴⁸ Many people told him to **keep quiet,^j** but he was crying out all the more, “Have mercy on me, Son of David!” ⁴⁹ Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” So they called the blind man and said to him, “**Have courage!^k Get up; He’s calling for you.**”^l

EXPLORING KEY WORDS

a This refers to those being led unjustly to their deaths, including the innocent child to be aborted, the criminal falsely accused, or those in spiritual darkness.

b The passive nature of the condemned is obvious, as they are led away. They did not plan their demises themselves.

c If we are guilty, there will be a lonely and hollow echo when we stand before a righteous and just God who knows all things.

d God protects us, and we’re to protect innocent life.

e Reciprocity is a clear concept in the Bible (see Ecc. 11:1; Luke 6:38; 2 Cor. 9:6).

f “as their actions deserve” (NLT)

g In that day, there was no other way for such people to subsist except through the generosity of passersby.

h Having found out Jesus was passing, Bartimaeus called out as an act of faith and desperation.

i Bartimaeus’ use of this title for the Messiah shows his awareness of Jesus’ right to the Davidic throne (see Isa. 9:7; Luke 1:32).

j These words indicated the people’s disdain for such people as beggars or possibly a desire to protect their teacher from interruption.

k The crowd that was corrective before then became encouraging. Our examples of compassion might lead to changed hearts of those around us.

l We should be aware of the people who need to come to Jesus, and like this crowd, work to see that they can. We should hope to teach others to “leave the children alone, and don’t try to keep them from coming to Me” (Matt. 19:14).

NOTES

»» A CALL TO PROTECT LIFE (Prov. 24:11)

- Solomon challenged his readers to rescue people wrongly condemned to death.

»» A WARNING AGAINST INACTION (Prov. 24:10,12)

- Solomon issued a warning against failing to act and addressed the excuses of ignorance and pious avoidance.

»» AN EXAMPLE SET (Mark 10:46-49)

- Jesus was leaving Jericho and had drawn a large crowd. Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, called out to Jesus but the crowd attempted to silence him. Jesus directed them to summon Bartimaeus, giving him His attention.

»» SUMMARY STATEMENTS

- God expects us to be advocates on behalf of others facing wrongful death, including cases of abortion.
- Believers must promote social justice, knowing God will hold them accountable for being “light in the world.”
- Believers are to value every person regardless of their physical limitations.
- The Lord values life from the womb to the tomb.
- God’s standards call for a balanced kingdom agenda, as we commit to protecting the born and the living.



FOCUS ATTENTION

In February 2015, the art world witnessed a record-breaking purchase. Reportedly, an 1892 painting by French Post-Impressionist Paul Gauguin sold to the Qatar Museum for \$300 million dollars, making it the most expensive painting ever bought. What at one time was a piece of blank canvas and paint now has a value of hundreds of millions of dollars. What other things might carry high value?

- Lead the group to think of heirlooms or other memorabilia.
- Explain that today we are going to consider what God places great value on: human beings. Specifically, we are going to look at the sanctity of human life.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE PROVERBS 24:11

What would you say is the overarching theme of verse 11?

- Words and phrases like “rescue” and “taken off to death” reveal the overarching theme is protecting people from wrongful, immoral deaths.

What differences in emphasis are presented in the first and second parts of this verse?

- The first part, “Rescue those being taken off to death,” is focused on acting for those who have no say in the matter and are victims of another person’s choices.
- The second part, “save those stumbling toward slaughter,” is focused on acting for those who, in either blindness or ignorance, are about to make a decision that will lead to harm and death.

PROVERBS 24:10,12

How can verse 10 be a measure of our spiritual health?

- Solomon is clear that if we fail to act in difficult situations, then our strength is much smaller than we might have thought.
- When we are presented with an opportunity to live and speak as our faith demands, and we instead wilt, then our spiritual health may be lacking.

How does verse 12 connect the themes of verses 10-11?

- Show the group that the set of questions in verse 12 demonstrates there are consequences to ignoring verses 10-11.
- Verse 12 helps us to see the seriousness of God’s demands in verses 10-11.
- We will have to answer to God for ignoring the innocent and needy.

What does verse 12 teach us about the character of God and how He relates to humanity?

- Verse 12 demonstrates for us the justice of God, in that He has the right and responsibility to judge sin and the deeds of humanity.

- Verse 12 shows us that God does this not by outward appearances but by weighing our hearts. In other words, God sees not just our actions but our intentions and innermost thoughts.
- Nothing we do or think can be hidden from God.

MARK 10:46-49

In this example from Mark, what did Jesus do that was different from the crowd around Him?

- Jesus took mercy on the man while the crowd rebuked him. The crowd tried to silence Bartimeus, but Jesus called out to him.
- Jesus saw this man as created in the image of God, while the crowd saw him as nothing but a nuisance.

How was Jesus modeling for us the Proverbs 24 principle from above? How should disciples of Jesus (like us), respond to what Jesus does here?

- Jesus understood that this blind man was suffering, vulnerable, and that He was able to help him. So Jesus called out to him and helped him (Mark 10:52).
- We, too, need to be aware of the vulnerable people among us and act to help them.

SUMMARIZE & CHALLENGE

Following Jesus’ example and Solomon’s proverbs, what specific sanctity of life issues should this group be concerned about in your city or town?

- Issues should/could include abortion, care for the elderly and the disabled, or help for the mentally ill, homeless, and addicts. Upholding the image of God in all people, regardless of ethnicity, race, gender, disability, social status, and so forth.
- God will hold believers accountable for how we live and respond to our world. We’re required to act for righteousness and justice for all people—from the womb to the tomb.
- **Personal Challenge:** It can be easy to tune out the problems of the world, especially if they don’t relate specifically to us. One way to make sure that we aren’t living with blinders on is to widen our circle of friends so that we gain different perspectives. Make it a priority this week to engage someone different from yourself. Learn about that person’s experiences and struggles. This will help you be a better Christian and better know how to pray and fight for what is right.



OBJECT LESSON

TWO ENVELOPES CONTAINING ANYTHING OF EQUAL VALUE (TICKETS, MONEY, A PHOTO OF A MANSION, ETC.)

For this object lesson, collect two items of equal value. Place the items inside each of the two envelopes.

During the session, hand the envelopes to two different volunteers. Let them know their job is to persuade the group that their envelope is the best (don't let them know what is inside). After they have given their pitch, lead the rest of the group to vote on which envelope is the better envelope.

Say: *While we may put a preference on a particular envelope, I can tell you that each of these are equally valuable. Why? Because their contents are worth the same amount of money. While we might put an artificial value on the envelope—inside, where it counts, they were equal.*

It's like that with us and God. While we far too often pick sides and put people down or elevate other groups, to God we are equally valuable because we are all created in His Image.



As we all share in the image of God, we should seek good for all people. What's more, we should seek to take the good news to all people, as they too should know the love of God displayed through Jesus Christ.



DIG DEEPER

EVERY LIFE COUNTS

God values life, which is not surprising since He created it. He also expects humankind to value life.

It is important to remember that God places more value in people's spiritual lives than in their physical lives. Jesus revealed this when He said, "Don't worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothing?" (Matt. 6:25). Jesus added the summary statement at the end of this chapter, "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you" (v. 33).

Since the spiritual aspects of people are of the highest value, it follows that weak physical bodies—malformed, aged, undeveloped child in the womb, and so forth—are of the same value in God's eyes as strong, shapely, fully grown humans. Since all lives are valuable to God, when societies choose to destroy them for any reason they are in direct defiance to Him.

There are Scriptures that we often quote when confronted with beginning of life issues like, "For it was You who created my inward parts; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I will praise You because I have been remarkably and wonderfully

made" (Ps. 139:13-14). However, an even more compelling verse might be God's word to Jeremiah: "I chose you before I formed you in the womb; I set you apart before you were born. I appointed you a prophet to the nations" (Jer. 1:5). God's purposes for everyone are different, but He is familiar with each one even outside of their physical lives. Ending lives prematurely interrupts God's purposes.

In the same way, this applies to end of life issues: Life is more than just its physical properties. Life is primarily spiritual. This principle considers all lives sacred and suggests, "that extreme measures to prolong life artificially encroach upon the prerogative of God to control life and death. For the same reason, any and all forms of euthanasia are contrary to the teaching of Scripture."¹

All people answer to God, whether or not they know it, and God defends all human life. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of His children to do everything in their power to protect those whom others would seek to destroy.

1. *Holman Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 1039.