

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Psalm 139:1-6,13-16**.
- B. This is the first in a series of three lessons to be delivered, having to do with some of the important issues of our day.
- C. It is my desire to speak briefly about the following:
 1. The sacredness of all human life.
 2. Human engineering before conception.
Contraception, Sterilization, Genetic screening and Abortion.
 3. Human engineering at conception.
Cloning, In vitro fertilization and Artificial insemination.
 4. Human engineering after conception.
Infanticide, Euthanasia and Capital punishment.
 5. Some difficult questions about human engineering:
 - a. Some things to consider and think about.
 - b. Have we gone from steward to creator?
- D. I would like to thank the following people for their contributions to this work. without their knowledge and wisdom in these areas this set of lessons would not have been possible; Dr. Bert Thompson, Winford Claiborne, John Waddey, Virgil Trout, Steven Webb.
- E. One of the suggestions that came out of the Men's retreat was that of preaching on current issues and topics. This series and others to come are in response to that request.
- F. Before we enter the discussion of the sacredness of all human life, let's do some self-examination that is necessary.

I. A SELF-EXAMINATION.

- A. The subject mentioned above is not easy to deal with. I may end up raising more questions than I answer. However, it is important that we realize the necessity to study such things and that our approach is very important.
- B. How ready are we to study these things?
 1. Do we teach Jesus as being our contemporary companion or merely as a figurehead of shadowy legend, or as the very Son of God?
 2. Do we view the Bible as a living word or as a handbook of religious clichés, sermon texts, and debate material?
 3. Do we teach our children to believe by utilizing patience and evidence? Or do we tell them to believe in archaic, unclear terms because "it's always been this way"?
 4. Are we growing in faith so that we are unafraid to demonstrate our faith before the skeptical philosophies in the arena of the streets, offices, and schools? Or do we retreat to safety of "our buildings?"
 5. Are we willing to face the perplexing questions of our time with an open mind characterized by faith and humility--trusting that in God's word there is an answer to the most difficult? Or do we seek quick answers that will satisfy what "we believe?" (Trout)
- C. I trust that in this study you will be open minded like in the study of any Bible subject.
- D. If we are ready to think, reason and study; we may begin.

II. PART ONE: THE SACREDNESS OF ALL HUMAN LIFE.

- A. The issues such as abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, genetic engineering and suicide are basic sources of division in our society today. What is a Christian to believe about such things?

- B. The answer to such a question may lie not in those basic issues but to realize that they are but symptoms of a far more serious problem. The fundamental problem relates to the nature of human beings--whether all human life is sacred.
- C. The Key Issue:
1. If prospective parents are informed that a child could be born with Down's Syndrome, spina bifida, Tay Sachs disease or some other abnormality, what are they supposed to do? May they decide that the child should be aborted? Do Down's Syndrome children serve no good purpose? When a patient--young or old--becomes comatose or so severely injured that recovery seems impossible--and maybe--who has the authority to give the family and their doctor the right and responsibility to sacrifice a life?
 2. "The Sacredness of All Human Life" must be one of the overriding factors in making decisions to our own self-worth and the worth of others.
 3. The worth of every individual is inherent-not contingent. We must NOT judge the value of a child based on his/her ability to perform. He/She may not have great intelligence, never play minor or major league baseball, and may have very few skills of any kind, but is important *just* because he is. (Claiborne)
- D. For example, Jesus did not think any less of the 1-talent man over the 5-talent man. Each man was to be blessed if he would only do what he was asked to do. Jesus did not value rate the lepers, paralytics, or even the demon-possessed (see Mt. 25:14-30).
- E. Who Decides:
1. If there are some lives not worth living, who should make that determination? Shall we commission our medical profession to make these difficult decisions?
 2. If the doctors do not possess moral expertise to make these grave decisions, perhaps we can turn to scientists in other academic disciplines. Are the biologists, zoologists, embryologists and other scientists equipped to deal with these important questions?
 3. Maybe we should delegate authority for this decision to the theologians. Who decides?
 4. Joseph Fletcher, one of the world's most enthusiastic supporters of abortion on demand, infanticide, euthanasia, genetic engineering and such like, outlines the following standards for deciding human hood. The following are the standards which determine whether a human being should be allowed to live:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Minimum intelligence (any person below an IQ of 20 on the standard Stanford-Binet test). b. Self-awareness. c. Self-control. d. A sense of time. e. A sense of futurity. f. A sense of the past. g. The ability to relate to others. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> h. Concern for others. i. Communication skills. j. Control of existence. k. Curiosity. l. Change and changeability. m. Balance or rationality and feeling. n. Idiosyncrasy. o. Neocortical (abnormality of the outside of the brain). (Claiborne)
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 5. Who decides? Who can we give the power to make such decisions? Obviously, no one has the authority to come up with such a list as did Fletcher and no one has the authority to carry out such a scheme yet in some ways this is already happening.
- F. The Image of God:
1. First, God the Father proposed to the other members of the Godhead that they make man(kind) in Their image.
 - a. What is the meaning of this expression, "the image of God?" Jesus taught that our resemblance to God could not be physical since God is spirit (see Jn. 4:24). The likeness must refer to intelligence, moral and spiritual qualities which man has in common with his Creator.
 - b. Romans 3:29 says, ["Is he the God of the Jews only? Is He not also of the Gentiles?"](#)

Yes, of the Gentiles also."

- c. Is he the God of able-bodied, highly intelligent, beautiful people only? Is He not also the God of the sick, the mentally handicapped, the physically deformed? Yes, of these and all other men.
2. Second, animals were placed on earth for man's use (see Gen. 1:28-30; Ac. 10:10-13).
- G. What Is Man?
What is the nature of human beings? "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visited him." (Psa. 8:1-4; see Jn. 3:16).
 1. First, David affirms that God made man "a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor-" Such statements are never made concerning any other of God's creatures (see Psa. 8:5).
 2. Second, God made man to have dominion over the works of God's hands. He put all things under man's feet (see Psa. 8:6-8).
- H. Fearfully and Wonderfully Made:
Psalm 139 teaches many awe-inspiring truths regarding God's love for man and the worth of every person.
 1. First, men are of such great concern and interest to God that He makes special efforts to know us (Psa. 139:1-3).
"O Lord, thou hast searched me. Thou knows my sitting down and mine uprising, thou understands my thoughts afar off. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways."
 2. Second, man cannot escape from God's love and care (Psa. 139:7-10).
"Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: If I made my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."
 3. Third, the Psalmist was exuberant in praise to God because he was "fearfully and wonderfully made." (Psa. 139:14).
 4. Fourth, God knew David when he was made in secret (Psa. 139:15-16).
and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect (incomplete, W.C.); and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them."
- I. The Dignity of Man:
 1. The prophets taught the worth of man as God commanded Jonah to warn those of Nineveh. They deserved a chance to repent (Jon. 4:10,11).
 2. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus showed that man should be more concerned with serving God than with food and drink. Man is more important in God's eyes than the animals and plants.
 3. God clothes the grass of the field, and feeds the birds of the air, "and are you not worth more than they?" (Mt. 6:25-26).
- J. May we conclude from these passages and thoughts that man is higher than the animals. All human life is sacred. No one has the right to make such decisions as to who will live and who will die.

CONCLUSION.

- A. Review of the material presented in this lesson:
 1. A self-examination about what you believe to be true.
 2. The sacredness of all human life.
- B. When we come to the realization that all human life is sacred the issues of abortion, infanticide, genetic engineering and euthanasia can be studied. from a Biblical perspective.
- C. Next time, the lesson will look at:
 1. Human engineering before conception; contraception, sterilization, genetic screening, and abortion (a misnomer under this heading),
 2. Human engineering at conception; cloning, artificial insemination, and in vitro fertilization.

INVITATION.

- A. No matter what the world may do, we must come to Jesus to be rid of our sin, to obtain the hope of eternal life.
- B. Do you believe the Bible?
- C. Do you believe that JC is the Son of God?
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

- A. Information used from Virgil Trout comes from an article in the *Gospel Advocate*, Feb. 17, 1966, Vol. CVIII, No.7, pages 97, 102, 103. Published in Nashville, TN.
- B. Information used from Winford Claiborne comes from an article in the Freed-Hardeman Lectureship Book, 1966, entitled, "Bioethical Issues: The Sacredness of All Human Life."
- C. Also used was some sermon material provided by Roy Enoch, Minister of the Effingham church of Christ, 1311 S. Fourth, Effingham, IL 62401.