

Principles for a Christian View of Life

Introduction

"Now this is eternal life; that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17:3, NIV). In Christ is the promise of eternal life; but since human life is mortal, humans are confronted with difficult issues regarding life and death. The following principles refer to the whole person (body, soul, and spirit), an indivisible whole (Genesis 2:7; 1 Thessalonians 5:23).

Life: Our valuable gift from God

1. God is the Source, Giver, and Sustainer of all life (Acts 17:25,28; Job 33:4; Genesis 1:30, 2:7; Psalm 36:9; John 1:3,4).
2. Human life has unique value because human beings, though fallen, are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27; Romans 3:23; 1 John 2:2; 1 John 3:2; John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:18,19).
3. God values human life not on the basis of human accomplishments or contributions but because we are God's creation and the object of His redeeming love (Romans 5:6,8; Ephesians 2:2-6; 1 Timothy 1:15; Titus 3:4,5; Matthew 5:43-48; Ephesians 2:4-9; John 1:3, 10:10).

Life: Our response to God's gift

4. Valuable as it is, human life is not the only or ultimate concern. Self-sacrifice in devotion to God and His principles may take precedence over life itself (Revelation 12:11; 1 Corinthians 13).
5. God calls for the protection of human life and holds humanity accountable for its destruction (Exodus 20:13; Revelation 21:8; Exodus 23:7; Deuteronomy 24:16; Proverbs 6:16,17; Jeremiah 7:3-34; Micah 6:7; Genesis 9:5,6).
6. God is especially concerned for the protection of the weak, the defenseless, and the oppressed (Psalm 82:3,4; James 1:27; Micah 6:8; Acts 20:35; Proverbs 24:11,12; Luke 1:52-54).
7. Christian love (agape) is the costly dedication of our lives to enhancing the lives of others. Love also respects personal dignity and does not condone the oppression of one person to support the abusive behaviour of another (Matthew 16:21; Philippians 2:1-11; 1 John 3:16; 1 John 4:8-11; Matthew 22:39; John 18:22,23; John 13:34).
8. The believing community is called to demonstrate Christian love in tangible, practical, and substantive ways. God calls us to restore gently the broken (Galatians 6:1,2; 1 John 3:17,18; Matthew 1:23; Philippians 2:1-11; John 8:2-11; Romans 8:1-14; Matthew 7:1,2, 12:20; Isaiah 40:42, 62:2-4).

Life: Our right and responsibility to decide

9. God gives humanity the freedom of choice, even if it leads to abuse and tragic consequences. His unwillingness to coerce human obedience necessitated the sacrifice of His Son. He requires us to use His gifts in accordance with His will and ultimately will judge their misuse (Deuteronomy 30:19,20; Genesis 3; 1 Peter 2:24; Romans 3:5,6, 6:1,2; Galatians 5:13).

10. God calls each of us individually to moral decision making and to search the scriptures for the biblical principles underlying such choices (John 5:39; Acts 17:11; 1 Peter 2:9; Romans 7:13-25).

11. Decisions about human life from its beginning to its end are best made within the context of healthy family relationships with the support of the faith community (Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 5,6).

12. Human decisions should always be centred in seeking the will of God (Romans 12:2; Ephesians 6:6; Luke 22:42).

These principles were approved and voted by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Executive Committee at the Annual Council session in Silver Spring, Maryland, October 12, 1992.