

Templates of Truth with Rick Smith
Audio Script - January 15, 2009

Stewardship is one of the basic tenants of the Christian faith. Many of us define stewardship, however, only in financial terms. But the Bible's teaching on stewardship has a much broader application. The stewardship of life is one such application, and serves as the theme for today's Templates of Truth.

God has entrusted to us every resource necessary to sustain and enhance our lives, but with these resources comes our responsibility for their proper care and use. That responsibility can be defined as stewardship. One of the greatest resources God has given to us is human life, and it is a resource upon which God places the greatest value. Consider these examples:

One of the Ten Commandments state: *You shall not murder* (Exodus 20:13). The Hebrew word that is translated *murder*, refers to the unlawful taking of human life, whether it is premeditated malice, an act of revenge, or motivated by anger, fear, jealousy or rage. God values human life because he created mankind in His image. When we take matters into our own hands, we assume a role that only God can righteously execute. An unborn baby is not our right to abort, no matter how inconvenient and unwanted is the pregnancy. The life of an aging or terminal patient is not our right to end, no matter how compassionately we defend it. Our own life is not ours to take, no matter how depressed or defeated we feel. God is the Creator of life, the Sustainer of life, and the appointment with death that every human being faces is determined by God, and not by man.

Jesus taught that you can be equally guilty of murder with your attitude and words as you can with your hands. He said: *Everyone who is angry with his brother...whoever shall say to his brother, "Raca" (which means good for nothing or airhead)...and whoever shall say (to his brother), "You fool," shall be guilty (of murder)* (Matthew 5:22). James posed the same situation in the writing of his Epistle: *What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you?...you lust and do not have, so you commit murder* (James 4:1-2). How did they commit murder? In the preceding verses, James identified the murder weapon – *the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison* (James 3:8). With the attitude of your heart towards another person, and with the words you choose in talking about him or her, you can assassinate their character, kill their reputation, and murder their credibility. What you must come to understand is that you stand just as guilty before God in doing so, as if you shot them with a handgun.

The sanctity that God holds for human life is also seen in the commands He gives us for how we relate to immigrants, widows, orphans, poor and needy people. To neglect them, exploit them, or abuse them in any way is equivalent to an act of murder. In the law God gave to Moses, He said: *you shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall not afflict any widow or orphan* (Exodus 22:21-22). Later, God said: *you shall not pervert the justice due an alien or an orphan, nor take a widow's garment in pledge...when you reap your harvest in your field and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow* (Deuteronomy 24:17-19).

Taking care of the special needs of immigrants, those who are fatherless and without marriage partners any longer, as well as those who are poor, hungry and struggling in poverty conditions demonstrates a respect for human life that reflects God's sanctity for every person.

The greatest expression ever made toward the sanctity of human life was when God allowed His only Son, Jesus Christ, to die on a cross for the sins of the world, so that through Him and His sacrificial death, all could have life abundant and life eternal. Celebrate life today and help protect the sanctity of life all around you.

That's today's Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in Christ Jesus.

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