

God Is Pro-Life - A Bible Study

by Pastor James Behringer

The title for this Bible class is both an overstatement and an understatement. It is an overstatement for us to say that God is pro-life, if we identify God's will with the political agenda of the pro-life movement. We will examine that overstatement first. But as we delve into God's pro-life orientation, it would be an understatement to regard God as interested only in preserving life. God is even more pro-life than that!

Malachi 2:16

“The man who hates and divorces his wife,” says the LORD God of Israel, “does violence to the one he should protect,” says the LORD Almighty. So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful.

Deuteronomy 24:1-4

If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man, and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of the LORD. Do not bring sin upon the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

Matthew 19:7-8

“Why then,” they asked, “did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?” Jesus replied, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.”

Discussions and Questions

1. What is God's attitude toward divorce?
2. When God gave the nation of Israel laws to govern it, what did God command regarding divorce?
3. What does Jesus identify as the reason that God gave Israel divorce laws?
4. What other kinds of sinful behavior might God regulate through earthly laws though his moral forbids such behavior?
5. What purposes might the existence of such laws serve for believers?

6. Agree or Disagree (defend your answer): Since God sometimes uses earthly laws for good purposes, Christians should accept the existence of those laws as His will.

For Study and Reflection

Genesis 1:27	So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
Acts 17:24,25	“The God who made the world and everything in it . . . gives everyone life and breath and everything else.”
Job 33:4	The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.
Exodus 20:13	“You shall not murder.”
Genesis 9:6	“Whoever sheds the human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind.”
Deuteronomy 32:39	There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life.
Psalms 31:15a	My times are in your hands.
Psalms 116:15	Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his faithful servants.

Questions for Discussion

7. What do we see about God in the first five passages that shows his concern with this life?
8. What are the limitations to God’s concern for the length of our earthly life?
9. We often quote Psalm 31:15 when we speak about a person’s birth and death. However, the word “times” refers to more than just those two events (in English as well as David’s original words). When we apply this verse to more than birth and death, how does that increase our understanding of how pro-life God is?
10. Agree or Disagree (Defend your answer): God’s concern for our lives extends to the insignificant details of each day.

For Study and Reflection

Isaiah 55:6	Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near.
Job 27:8	For what hope have the godless when he is cut off, when God takes away their life?
Acts 17:26-27	He marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though He is not far from any one of us.
Romans 14:11-12	It is written: “‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord, ‘every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God.’” So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.

Questions for Discussion

11. It is not longevity that is the ultimate “life issue” to God. What is God’s greatest concern about human life?
12. What are some ways that this ultimate “life issue” affects other life issues for Christians?

For Study and Reflection

Jeremiah 29:11-12 “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.”

John 10:10b “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

John 1:4 In him was life, and that life was the light of mankind.

Questions for Discussion

13. What is God’s vision of what life can be?
14. Describe what it means to have life “to the full.”

For Study and Reflection

Job 13:15a Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him.

Daniel 3:17-18 “If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

Romans 8:36 “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

John 14:3 “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

Questions for Discussion

15. In what sense might some people get the impression that God is not pro-life when it comes to human life on earth?
16. In what way is God pro-life in this case?
17. How does this aspect of God’s view of life provide an unexpected twist to the Christian’s view of life?
18. In review of what we’ve talked about, in what three areas of human life is God pro-life?
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.

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Teacher's Guide

To the Teacher: This class was originally taught in one hour and ten minutes. It could easily be done as two classes. The first two parts would form one lesson and the third part could form the second lesson. The second and third parts could also be used individually as brief Bible studies for the beginning of an organizational meeting. The first part was not written as a “stand alone” Bible study; if done without one of the other parts it could confuse students because it might leave the impression that God is not pro-life after all, or that it is somehow wrong for an individual to have a pro-life political agenda.

The title for this Bible class is both an overstatement and an understatement. It is an overstatement for us to say that God is pro-life, if we identify God's will with the political agenda of the pro-life movement. We will examine that overstatement first. But as we delve into God's pro-life orientation, it would be an understatement to regard God as interested only in preserving life. God is even more pro-life than that!

[Point out that the quotation marks are meant to indicate a political agenda. Point out also that the passages chosen for this section are meant to illustrate how political solutions may be different from God's moral law—the passages do not deal with abortion but divorce.]

Malachi 2:16

“The man who hates and divorces his wife,” says the LORD God of Israel, “does violence to the one he should protect,” says the LORD Almighty. So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful.

Deuteronomy 24:1-4

If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man, and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of the LORD. Do not bring sin upon the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

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Discussions and Questions

1. What is God’s attitude toward divorce?
(Malachi 2:16) He hates it.
2. When God gave the nation of Israel laws to govern it, what did God command regarding divorce?
(Deuteronomy 24:1-4) A certificate of divorce be given and remarriage to the first spouse was forbidden if another marriage intervened.
3. What does Jesus identify as the reason that God gave Israel divorce laws?
(Matthew 19:8) Because of the hardness of the human heart.
4. What other kinds of sinful behavior might God regulate through earthly laws though his moral forbids such behavior?
Abortion might be regulated. The results of sexual immorality (disease, prostitution) might need laws to deal with or restrict them, though sexual immorality is a sin. Students may have other examples.
5. What purposes might the existence of such laws serve for believers?
God works in all things for the good of his people. Abortion restrictions may give a Christian’s conscience time to work. Restriction of prostitution to a certain area might protect Christians from temptation. Other laws might become a challenge for the Christian to protest and show that he or she is different. Some laws may serve as a discipline for believers. Although the question doesn’t ask about the purpose for unbelievers, laws that permit sin may also be a judgment against the ungodly.
6. Agree or Disagree (defend your answer): Since God sometimes uses earthly laws for good purposes, Christians should accept the existence of those laws as his will.
[Encourage students to attack AND defend the statement.]
AGREE: Under totalitarian governments citizens can do nothing about such laws and may have to accept the suffering that will be their lot when their conduct and their conversations show that they are different. Christians should not use the fact that immorality is tolerated as an excuse to refuse to obey the government in other matters which are not sinful, or to overthrow the government.
DISAGREE: Just as Jesus argued that laws on divorce did not represent God’s views on divorce, we should recognize when the laws of our land do NOT represent God’s will and work to change those laws or to sway people not to take advantage of the permitted and regulated sin.

For Study and Reflection

Genesis 1:27	So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
Acts 17:24,25	“The God who made the world and everything in it . . . gives everyone life and breath and everything else.”
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Psalms 116:15	Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his faithful servants.

Questions for Discussion

7. What do we see about God in the first five passages that shows his concern with this life?
God invented life—it was his idea—and he still gives life today. He does not want this life terminated and has set a punishment for those who end the life of another.
8. What are the limitations to God’s concern for the length of our earthly life?
(Deuteronomy 32:39) God also has plans for the circumstances of our death and uses suffering and death as a blessing for believers.
9. We often quote Psalm 31:15a when we speak about a person’s birth and death. However, the word “times” refers to more than just those two events (in English as well as David’s original words). When we apply this verse to more than birth and death, how does that increase our understanding of how pro-life God is?
He uses our lives, not just preserves them. He sees a value and purpose in living—a role for the events in our lives.
10. Agree or Disagree (Defend your answer): God’s concern for our lives extends to the insignificant details of each day.
[Encourage students to attack AND defend the statement.]
AGREE: God can use even the smallest things as a blessing to us or to serve some purpose. Furthermore, God says in his Word that the hairs of our heads are numbered (Matthew 10:30).
DISAGREE: We should not become fatalists however, assuming that everything that happens is because God required it to be that way. God gives us some freedom to influence our circumstances. Such things as the pattern of our china or the brand name of our tools usually matters more to us than to God, unless there is a spiritual aspect (such as gratitude to God or greed).

For Study and Reflection

Isaiah 55:6	Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near.
Job 27:8	For what hope have the godless when he is cut off, when God takes away their life?
Acts 17:26-27	He marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach

out for him and find him, though He is not far from any one of us.
Romans 14:11-12 It is written: “‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord, ‘every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God.’” So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.

Questions for Discussion

11. It is not longevity that is the ultimate “life issue” to God. What is God’s greatest concern about human life?
(Isaiah 55:6) That human beings would come into a relationship with him, (Job 27:8) a relationship that gives a hope that the godless do not have.
12. What are some ways that this ultimate “life issue” affects other life issues for Christians?
If we have a relationship with God, we have a hope that the godless do not have and we do not fear death; on the other hand, Christians might want to keep an unbelieving loved one alive as long as possible, desiring that the person come to faith. Christians desire the unborn to have a chance to come into a saving relationship with God.

For Study and Reflection

Jeremiah 29:11-12 “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.”

John 10:10b “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

John 1:4 In him was life, and that life was the light of mankind.

Questions for Discussion

13. What is God’s vision of what life can be?
A life filled with spiritual blessings, a life with him that never ends (“a future”), a life lived “to the full,” in which his people walk in the new life that is ours in Christ.
14. Describe what it means to have life “to the full.”
[To clarify, ask “What is the Christian life full of?”] Full of grace, joy, peace, mercy, etc. [Take the time to let the class give examples of how their life is full of joy or peace, etc.]
Romans 5:17, 20 *For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ . . . where sin increased, grace increased all the more,*
Ephesians 1:7-8 *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding,*
2 Corinthians 8:2 *In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.*
John 14:27 *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*

For Study and Reflection

- Job 13:15a** Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him.
- Daniel 3:17-18** “If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”
- Romans 8:36** “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”
- John 14:3** “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

Questions for Discussion

15. In what sense might some people get the impression that God is not pro-life when it comes to human life on earth?

It serves his purpose to have his people suffer and die; the cross is the fate of his Son and his people. (Referring back to an earlier section, someone may point out that though God protects life, he gave the death penalty.)

16. In what way is God pro-life in this case?

God is pro-eternal life; he wants us to be with him.

17. How does this aspect of God’s view of life provide an unexpected twist to the Christian’s view of life?

Earthly life is not the ultimate value; the Christian is not willing to preserve his own life if it is necessary to lay it down for Christ. (Mark 8:35 — “For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.” Philippians 1:21 — “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”)

18. In review of what we’ve talked about, in what three areas of human life is God pro-life?

A. God is pro-temporal life. He created it and uses it for his purposes.

B. God is pro-spiritual life. He wants fellowship with us.

C. God is pro-eternal life. He wants us to spend eternity in heaven.