

Of course, we do not have a dead Savior. The resurrection and ascension of our Lord assure us of His victory and of the outpouring of His presence as He calls us to live in that victory. That leads us to our final foundation stone.

God Holds Us by the Hand

“I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you” (Isaiah 42: 6a).

The LORD speaks in this verse of the Messiah, but He also gives us a picture of His relationship with those He calls through His Son in Baptism.



“We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). In baptism, the “righteousness” of Christ—His perfect holiness—is applied to the imperfect sinner. We are given new life in which to walk.

Jesus sends His Spirit to walk along side us, not as our “buddy,” but as our God. It is a very one-sided side walking!

One year, for Christmas, Joey received a coat with deep, fur-lined pockets. He talked his dad into taking him for a walk to see if his hands would stay warm in those pockets. The winter weather cooperated in the experiment with blowing snow and ice-covered walks. “We should hold hands,” said Dad. “No,” replied Joey, “I want to keep my hands in my pockets.” The first patch of ice claimed Joey. As he brushed himself off, he said, “Daddy, maybe I should hold your hand.” He reached up able to grasp only a couple of Dad’s fingers in his little hand. When the next patch of ice sent his feet dancing, he could not hold on and went down again. Dad said, “Joey, maybe I should hold onto your hand.”

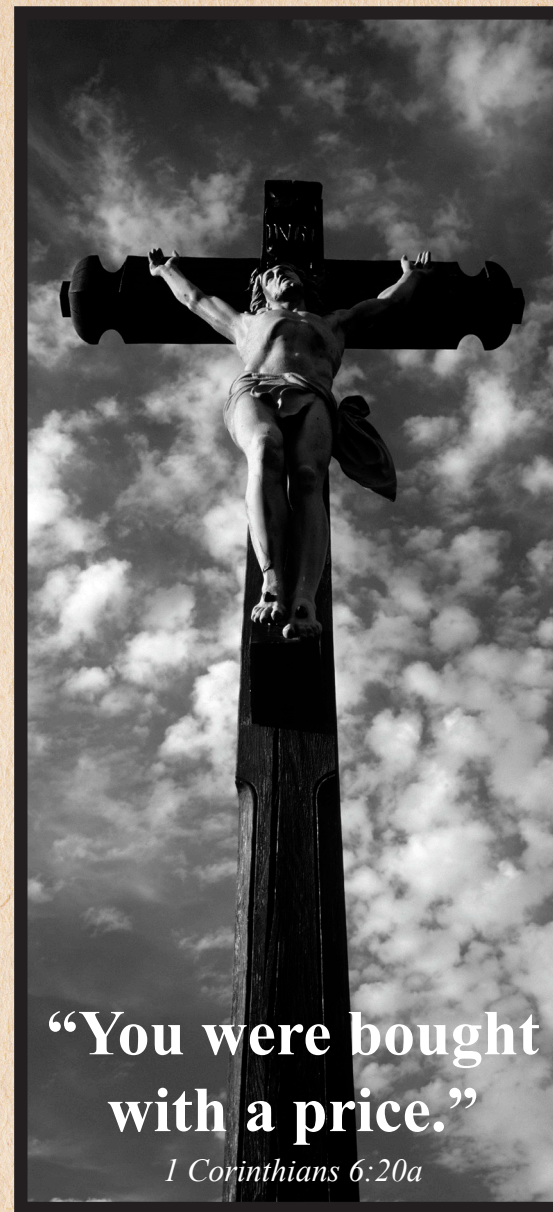
We do not hold on to the Father. He holds on to us. What value God gives to those He has called that we should be His children held by His hand!

Asking the Right Questions

Ask the right questions and the answers provide a solid foundation upon which to stand as we deal with decisions about life and death.

The value of human life comes from what God has done and continues to do. Life is His *handiwork*! He creates life with His hands. He redeemed life with His hands. He holds His children by the hand.

When we understand these answers, then, as we confront difficult issues, some questions won’t even need to be asked.



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The Handiwork of God

by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb



“What does God do that gives value to human life?”

The answer gives Christians a foundation for dealing with life and death decisions that is certain, hope filled, and reassuring.

“What will the quality of her life be?”
“What real meaning does his life have?”
“Would grandma want to be like this?”

Such questions center the determining factor of life’s value on ability or lack thereof. The answers become arbitrary and uncertain and cannot provide a foundation for Christian decision-making when facing difficult circumstances.

The Right Question

The Christian can ask a more fundamental and helpful question. “What does God do that gives value to human life?” This question centers the determining factor of life’s value in God. The answer gives Christians a foundation for dealing with life and death decisions that is certain, hope filled, and reassuring. Consider the following answers to this question as three foundation stones upon which we can stand.

God Creates Life with His Hands

“For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:13-14a).

From the beginning of time, God involved Himself in the creation of life in a very hands-on way. He “formed” Adam from the dust of the ground and breathed into him the “breath of life” (Genesis 2:7). He “made” (literally “built”) Eve from Adam’s rib (Genesis 2:22). Picture the potter forming a lump of clay or the craftsman carefully building a piece of furniture.

God tells these first humans, “Be fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 1:28). He sets into motion a biological process for procreation. But His hands still “shape” and “form” and “make” and “knit” inside the womb.

A yellowed clump of thread rests in a heritage box in our living room. It doesn’t look like much and it certainly is not useful for anything. Close inspection reveals the beginning intricacies of tatting. But no one knows what it was going to be. Why then does this clump of thread carry such great value? Grandma started making this just before she died. It was found next to her rocking chair. Thus, its value comes not because of how it looks or from its usefulness. The value comes from who made it.

This is the first foundation stone. The value of human life does not flow from how someone looks or how productive we view them. Their value comes from Who made them. Every human life is the handiwork of God. The child in the womb, grandma in the care center, and uncle Ralph with Alzheimer’s all have a God-given value that transcends our person-centered perceptions.



God Redeemed Life with His Hands

“You were bought with a price”
(1 Corinthians 6:20a).

God loved what He made with His hands so much that when we were lost in sin, He sent His only Son to redeem us, to buy us back with a price. This becomes our second foundation stone.

More than any other verse, Luke 1:31 testifies to the value God bestows on human life from the moment of conception. **“And behold, you will conceive in your womb ...”** The redeeming process that required God to become flesh began at conception. It was a necessary place to start. Jesus had to be a holy embryo because we were unholy embryos (Psalm 51:5). Jesus’ divinity at the moment of conception attests to our humanity at that moment. Jesus’ becoming an embryo gives value to all embryos.

The buying back process didn’t stop there. Jesus’ journey in Mary’s fallopian tube was the beginning of His journey to the cross. The hands and feet that developed in Mary’s womb would one day be pierced with nails. Think of this magnificent mystery! The hands that created the universe and knit you together in the womb, became hands that stretched out on a cross and bled the price of redemption. All humanity bought with a price. What value this bestows.

There are many happy memories of gathering around grandma’s old pump organ in our family room. Grandma used to spin us around on the leather-topped stool until we could reach the keyboard. She would pump the pedals as we played the keys.

I was a seminarian with a young family when grandma went to heaven. But I was determined to scrape together enough funds to purchase the organ at grandma’s auction. It took \$800.00 for the organ and another \$125.00 for the stool! Where is the value of grandma’s organ? It has value because it was grandma’s and it has value because we paid dearly to get it back.

Human life has value because God created it, and it has value because He paid dearly to buy it back! It wasn’t \$925.00. It wasn’t “gold or silver,” but His “holy precious blood” and His “innocent suffering and death.”

