

GOD'S CULTURE OF LIFE

You may use the terms, *culture of life* and *culture of death*, in relation to the way you envision things *should* be and the many evils of today's society. The word, *culture*, has various definitions depending on the dictionary. Those who have lived in different countries or even different parts of the same country recognize the differences between their cultures through experience. The most common definition of culture is that it is reflected in art, architecture, literature, music, textiles, and dress and in what we produce and how we work. It is that and much more. The Cambridge dictionary defines culture as "the way of life of a particular people, esp. as shown in their ordinary behavior and habits, their attitudes toward each other, and their moral and religious beliefs."

God is not only the Creator of all life, but the Creator of the culture of life. It reflects in everything He made and the cycles and order He put into the universe and every living thing from vegetation to animals to mankind made in His image. God's culture of life is the way of life for which He created His people, his desires for our ordinary behavior and habits, including how we treat each other because we are in relationship with Him and follow His ways.

God is the Creator of heaven and earth and all life. He made it all and saw that it was not only good, but the crown of his creation, mankind, was very good. Before sin entered the world there was no evidence of human illness or death. There was no fear, no shame, no trauma. Animals didn't attack each other or humans. Clothing wasn't necessary because Adam and Eve were entirely innocent.

After they sinned and were cast from the garden, the culture of death began. But God was still for life and began laying a plan for redemption, a continued culture of life that transcends the fall. It was through the curse God put on the serpent that He initiated His plan to not only bring eternal salvation for humankind but abundant life in the middle of the mess our sin would cause in our world. Descended from Adam and Eve was Jesus the Messiah – the Way, the Truth, and the Life. God's instructions and commandments, His written Word, became our guidebook for living life His way, maintaining the culture of life He designed.

God also commands that we choose life and blessings over death and curses so that we and our descendants may live.⁴⁷ The culture of life is a choice! Though we don't have control of the various cultures around us, we can choose God's culture of life in our hearts and demonstrate its life-giving principles in every place we interact with others. Through Jesus, the law of the Spirit who gives life has set us free from the law of sin and death. God not only commands us to choose life, but we are also *free* to do so!

Because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we can live and move within this redeemed culture of life successfully. Even though we are prone as humans to fail, to miss the mark, to sin, we have the power to overcome the stink of death (and I do mean stink!) due to our failures on this earth. Death not only stinks, it stings. But part of our culture of life is the reality that death has been swallowed up in victory. We do not see this fully now, but it is spoken as though it is already accomplished. *"The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"*⁴⁸

In God's culture of life, He commanded that we do not take a life. We are created in His image – every person born and preborn – and valued as one worth dying for. Not only are we to not take a life, but Jesus demonstrated that we are to lay down our own lives for others. Never once in the Scriptures is a preborn life given less value than one that is born. The culture of life is one of hope and grace, the redemption and love displayed in the gospel of Jesus Christ that we extend to everyone

Get EQUIPPED: Redemptively Overcoming Abortion in the Church

SESSION 2 – PRE-CLASS READING

GOD’S WORD ON LIFE

around us. It is the living out of this gospel in thought, word, and deed. This is the definition as well as the essence and the authenticity of the culture of life to which Paul refers when he speaks of the kingdom. “For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”⁴⁹

We will discuss the culture of death in Section II: Mankind’s Perversion, Class 6, Collateral Damage.