

# **BIBLE DOCTRINE**

## **for Teens and Young Adults**

*God's Word, inspired, infallible,  
The only source of truth,  
Must be the center of our lives  
Already in our youth.*

*Its doctrines, the pure truths therein,  
With dogma as its core,  
Are searched out in theology  
From early days of yore.*

*May God then bless the study of  
His great eternal Word,  
That in the hearts of young and old  
Its truths may e'er be heard.*

# **BIBLE DOCTRINE**

## **for Teens and Young Adults**

### **BOOK III**

#### **CHAPTERS 21–30**

**James W. Beeke**

**Illustrated by Ben De Regt**



**Reformation Heritage Books**  
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Above all may we acknowledge the Lord who has graciously provided the opportunity and means to produce this and the previous series of Bible doctrine textbooks.

May it please the Lord, in His sovereign good pleasure, to richly bless this means of instruction to many high school students and other younger and older adults reading and studying it “that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up unto Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ” (Ephesians 4:14-15).

Further may the Holy Spirit graciously apply the eternal truths of His Word, studied in this series, to our hearts that increasingly we may be led to “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength” (Mark 12:30a). He is most worthy to be praised and worshipped.

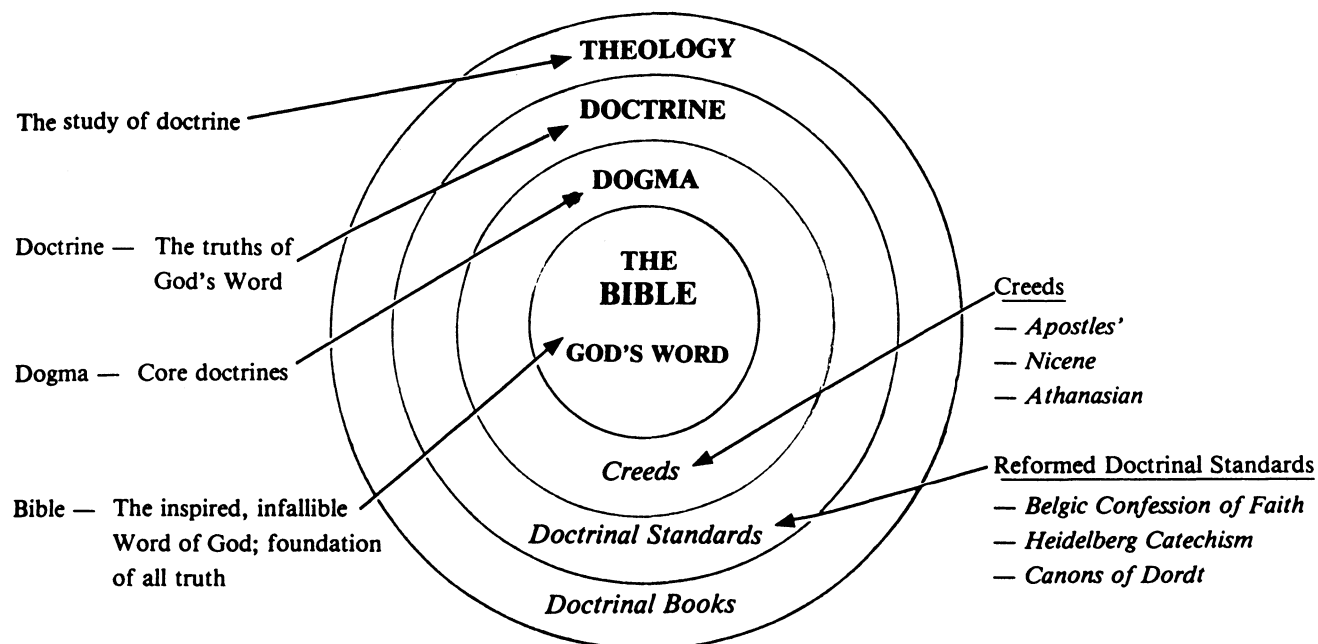
— James W. Beeke

## INTRODUCTION

TO: All high school students, other young people, and adults reading this book

Dear Friends,

Can you read what is written on the chalkboard in the photograph pictured on the title pages — pages 2 and 3? It is reproduced for you here:



What does this sketch mean? What is in the center of this drawing? The *Bible* is God's Word. It proclaims God's eternal and unchanging truths. The truths of the Bible are called *doctrine*. In this series of books, *Bible Doctrine for Teens and Young Adults, Books I, II, and III*, you will study Bible doctrine — the truths of God's Word. The core doctrines, those necessary to believe for salvation, are called *dogmas*. The explanation of Bible doctrine is called *theology*.

Theology is the attempt to properly understand that which the Bible is teaching regarding a certain doctrine. To do this, it is necessary to read all of the references to this truth found throughout the entire Bible. These references must be carefully studied and compared, and then placed into statements and explanations of belief. This is needed in order to properly summarize that which the Bible teaches about sin, salvation, death, baptism, and all other Bible doctrines. The course of study contained in this series of books is a beginning course in theology.

No person is as important to know as God, no book as necessary to read as the Bible, and no truths as crucial to understand as the doctrines of Scripture. Therefore, as you study Bible doctrine, do so seriously and prayerfully. God can bless your study by applying these truths in your heart and life. To personally and increasingly come to know, love, and follow God and His truth is the most important purpose of human life; it is the reason why man was created. Through salvation in Jesus Christ, sinners can be restored into a loving relationship and communion with God to God's glory and their joy.

May God personally bless your study of Bible doctrine, through the means of this series of books.





# 21

## God's Moral Law • Commandments 6 and 7

*Just as the mighty ocean is  
Restrained within its bounds,  
God's moral law gives safety from  
The evil that surrounds.*

*"Thou shalt not kill," God's law proclaims—  
Flee anger, hatred, strife;  
Man has a soul and so transcends  
All other forms of life.*

*To not commit adultery,  
We must be chaste and pure;  
For all uncleanness, wrong desires,  
And lust God won't endure.*



## FROM OUR REFORMED DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

### *The Heidelberg Catechism*

#### *Questions and Answers 105-109*

Q. 105. What doth God require in the sixth commandment?

A. That neither in thoughts, nor words, nor gestures, much less in deeds, I dishonor, hate, wound, or kill my neighbor, by myself or by another; but that I lay aside all desire of revenge: also, that I hurt not myself, nor wilfully expose myself to any danger. Wherefore also the magistrate is armed with the sword, to prevent murder.

Q. 106. But this commandment seems only to speak of murder?

A. In forbidding murder, God teaches us, that He abhors the causes thereof, such as envy, hatred, anger, and desire of revenge; and that He accounts all these as murder.

Q. 107. But is it enough that we do not kill any man in the manner mentioned above?

A. No: for when God forbids envy, hatred, and anger, He commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves; to show patience, peace, meekness, mercy, and all kindness, towards him, and prevent his hurt as much as in us lies; and that we do good, even to our enemies.

Q. 108. What doth the seventh commandment teach us?

A. That all uncleanness is accursed of God: and that therefore we must with all our hearts detest the same, and live chastely and temperately, whether in holy wedlock, or in single life.

Q. 109. Doth God forbid in this commandment, only adultery, and such like gross sins?

A. Since both our body and soul are temples of the Holy Ghost, He commands us to preserve them pure and holy: therefore He forbids all unchaste actions, gestures, words, thoughts, desires, and whatever can entice men thereto.

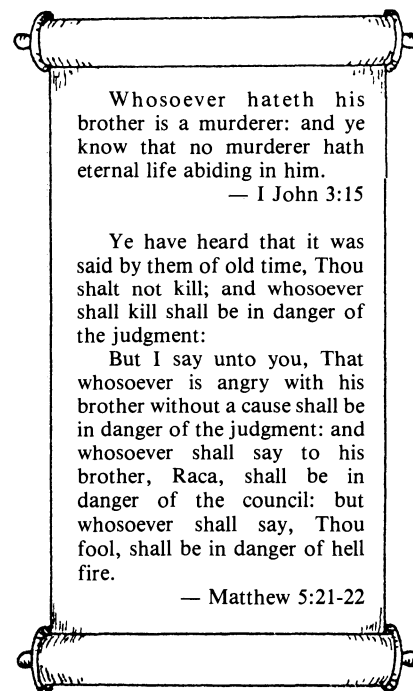
# 21

## GOD'S MORAL LAW

### THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT

God's sixth commandment states, "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13). It forbids all unjust killing, wounding, and harming of others or myself. When condemning violence against others, this commandment also prohibits all causes of it — hatred, anger, and seeking of revenge. It requires the opposite — love, patience, and care for others. It implies that we are to value human life and to show concern for the health of others and ourselves.

It is possible to murder ourselves or others physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually. All are forbidden by God. Physical killing includes murder, suicide, and all forms of carelessness or recklessness in health and safety matters. God is the Giver of human life and He has made man in His image. Though we have lost the image of God in its narrower sense through our sinful fall in Adam, its wider image-bearing characteristics remain (refer to Chapter Seven for an explanation of God's image in man). These characteristics include our possession of both a body and a soul and our being destined for eternal existence. In a special manner, we receive our souls directly from God. Human life, therefore, **transcends** plant or animal life in value. No person may ever intentionally take the life of another unless God has granted His permission.

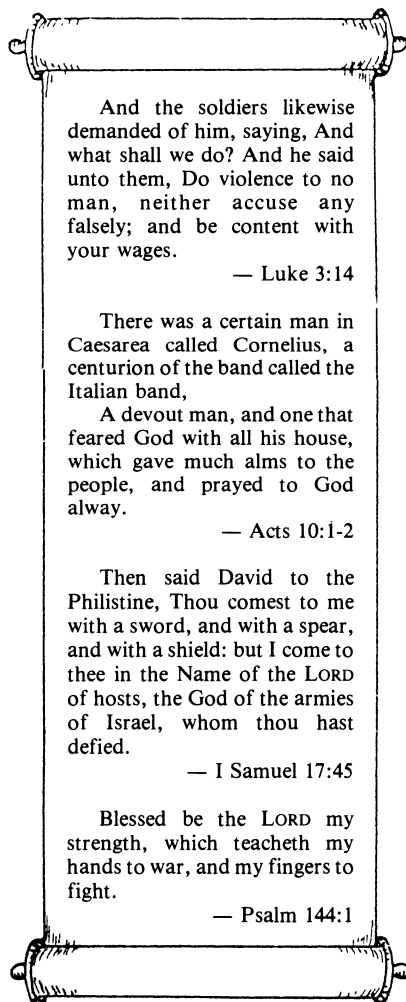


- **Transcends** — Goes above or beyond; exceeds; is superior to



Self-defense actions may only be exercised in extreme situations. In all other cases where there is an opportunity to reason with and win over the other person through self-sacrifice, this is commanded. What principle regarding this truth did Jesus teach in His Sermon on the Mount?

- **Legitimate** — Lawful; according to the law
- **Centurions** — Roman military officers placed over one hundred soldiers



The Lord forbids all forms of *unjust* killing. The *just* killing of another, however, is necessary at times due to the sinful actions arising from depraved human hearts. God grants permission or requires the taking of human life in three situations — in the cases of:

1. Legitimate self-defense
2. Just war
3. Necessary capital punishment

First, regarding legitimate self-defense, God's Word teaches, "If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him" (Exodus 22:2). In this case a thief was breaking into a person's house by *breaking up* the mud wall to enter. To protect himself and his family, the owner hit the thief in an attempt to subdue him. He did not intend to kill him, but to stop him. Death resulted, however, but the owner was free because his action was one of **legitimate** self-defense.

In acts of self-defense, legitimacy is determined by judging whether the defense response is appropriate for the perceived threat. For instance, a father shooting and killing an armed intruder in his home who refused to drop his weapon when commanded to do so is appropriate self-defense. The father had to shoot to avoid a real threat of being killed himself with his family. However, a father shooting and killing a person hiding behind a bush in his yard is an overreaction. The response is not appropriate for the threat; therefore, in this case his self-defense action would be an **illegitimate** overreaction.

Secondly, the Bible provides numerous examples of just and unjust wars. An examination of Israel's history will establish this fact. John the Baptist instructed the soldiers who enquired of him that they must deal justly, but not that they must leave their work. Neither Christ nor Peter objected to the occupation of the **centurions** to whom they spoke. Therefore, to condemn all wars or service in the armed forces on the basis of the sixth commandment, as some do, is not biblical.

To distinguish just from unjust wars, the following three points must be examined. A just war is one that is fought to defend a nation from attack upon its:

1. Expression of true religion
2. Exercise of proper liberty
3. Possession of rightful land

Thirdly, God requires governments to exercise capital punishment, to kill persons proven guilty of premeditated murder. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man" (Genesis 9:6). Human life is given and regulated by the God of life. Man may never end human life when God has not commanded it, but neither may man extend human life when God requires that it be taken. Capital punishment is required, but it is to be exercised judiciously, impartially, and only after full and proper legal proceedings. The following discussion addresses two frequent objections to the exercise of capital punishment.



"I do not favor the exercise of capital punishment," Mr. Thompson stated. "I find it both cruel and primitive. I feel that there are more educational and loving ways of dealing with those who have committed murder."

And if any mischief follow,  
then thou shalt give life for life,  
Eye for eye, tooth for  
tooth, hand for hand, foot for  
foot,

Burning for burning,  
wound for wound, stripe for  
stripe.

— Exodus 21:23-25

And he that killeth any man  
shall surely be put to death.

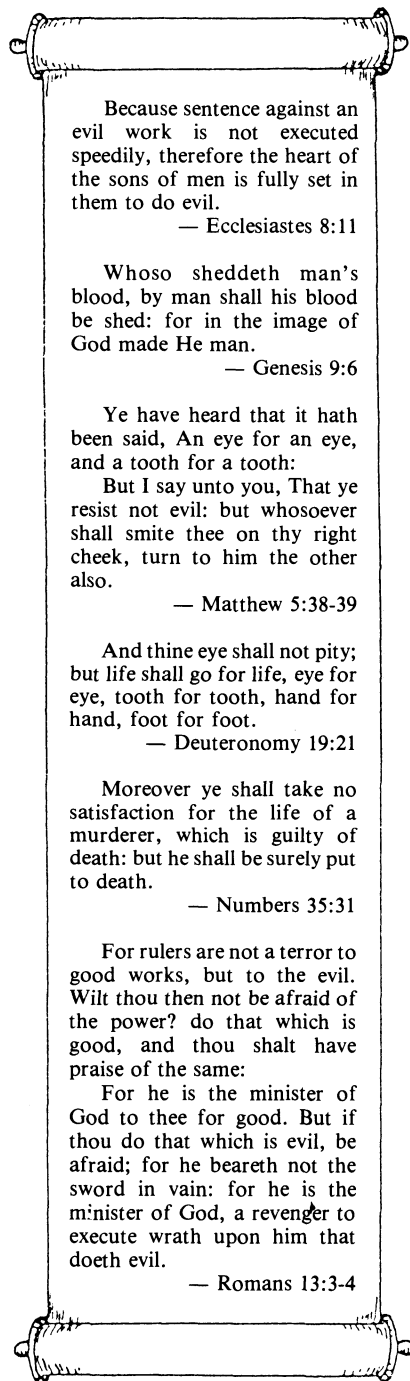
— Leviticus 24:17

For he is the minister of  
God to thee for good. But if  
thou do that which is evil, be  
afraid; for he beareth not the  
sword in vain: for he is the  
minister of God, a revenger to  
execute wrath upon him that  
doeth evil.

— Romans 13:4

For if I be an offender, or  
have committed any thing  
worthy of death, I refuse not to  
die: but if there be none of  
these things whereof these  
accuse me, no man may deliver  
me unto them. I appeal unto  
Caesar.

— Acts 25:11



Mr. Roberts thought for a moment and then replied, "I understand that you are scheduled for a kidney operation in the near future, is that correct?"

"Yes, in two weeks."

"Well, I find operations to be both cruel and primitive. I think that there are more educational and loving ways to deal with those who have serious diseases."

"You are mistaken," Mr. Thompson replied. "If my one kidney is not removed, the disease will spread throughout my entire body. My doctor is not cruel; he is acting for my health and welfare!"

"Precisely!" Mr. Roberts agreed. "As the painful cutting out of one organ is best for the health of your entire body, so the cutting off of a member who has committed murder is best for the health and welfare of that society. If he is not 'cut out,' the disease of murder will spread throughout the entire body of people. Therefore God has commanded the exercising of capital punishment in His Word."

"That is a clear illustration; I never thought of it that way," Mr. Thompson replied. "But God's commands to exercise capital punishment are Old Testament commands, aren't they? Didn't Jesus teach us not to require *an eye for an eye* anymore, but to forgive and to *turn the other cheek*?"

"Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount that 'whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also' refers to personal dealings with others. If someone wrongs me, I am not to seek personal revenge. This instruction, however, is not referring to a government's response to crime. In Genesis 9, after the flood, God gave universal rules to Noah and his descendants for establishing order in the post-flood world, of which one command was, 'whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.' The New Testament upholds this truth. When speaking of the duties of governments in Romans 13, it states, 'If thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he (the government; the rulers) beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.' "

What results will be witnessed in societies which replace God's requirement of capital punishment for premeditated murder with man's self-designed penalties?

The exercise of capital punishment for premeditated murder is necessary for the following four reasons:

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IS REQUIRED FOR MURDERERS	
Reason	Example Text
1. It is explicitly required by God in His Word	Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man. — Genesis 9:6
2. It is based upon the absolute justice of requiring life for life	Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die. Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death. — Numbers 35:30-31
3. It is necessary to cleanse the land from the guilt of blood-shedding	So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it. Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel. — Numbers 35:33-34
4. It is the most powerful deterrent to murder, effectively serving a society's health and welfare	And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you. And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot. — Deuteronomy 19:20-21



Which of the four corresponding reasons is supported by the following U.S. statistics?

During the first ten years in which capital punishment was outlawed (from 1967-1977), murders in the U.S. almost doubled.

1967 — 10,000 murders  
1977 — 19,000 murders

The act of premeditated murder includes abortion (the killing of unborn children), euthanasia (the killing of the aged, infirm, or incurably diseased), and suicide (the taking of one's own life).

Abortion is murder. It is the intentional taking of the life of another human being. This truth can be established:

1. By examining *God's Word* — The Bible testifies of distinct human personhood, of soul and body, as beginning at conception.



How does premeditated murder differ from accidental killing? Why are abortion, euthanasia, and suicide all cases of premeditated murder?

The following are examples of this truth:

**?** From the moment of a person's conception, is there any time in which the Bible does not refer to the person as human? Is there any medical examination that can establish that a developing child is not human?

Why are these questions important when viewing abortion?

- “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 51:5). How could David, as an unborn child, be “shapen in iniquity” and possess a sinful nature without a soul? From conception, he possessed a human soul.
- “For Thou hast possessed my reins: Thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them” (Psalm 139:13-16). David speaks of his distinct personhood from conception by using the terms of “my,” “me,” and “I.”
- “The life thereof, which is the blood thereof” (Genesis 9:4), and several other verses in Scripture speak of blood as life. The shedding of blood is taking the life of that creature. Shedding the unborn’s blood is a shedding of human blood; it is the killing of a human being.
- “If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman’s husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life” (Exodus 21:22-23). Willfully killing an unborn child required the same penalty as murdering any other person — life for life.

2. By examining *created reality* — No cleverly-devised, watered-down terms or phrases can conceal the fact that abortion is the willful taking of human life. A developing child is not part of his mother’s body. This can be established by asking the following questions:



- If the developing child is part of the mother's body, after searching an **anatomical** chart, which organ of her body is it?
- When the unborn child's heartbeats are detected by ultrasound at six weeks from conception, and the child's own blood circulation is observable at three weeks, whose heart and circulatory system are functioning?
- If this distinct, developing, living creature is not a human being, after searching a biological classification chart of living organisms, what would it be?

Due to the liberalization of abortion laws or their interpretation, the following absurd contradictions or reversals of values are witnessed in our country today:

- The most dangerous place for a developing child today is his mother's womb, the place God designed for the child's care and protection. Today, more unborn children die in our country from abortions than from all forms of diseases and accidents combined.
- Some people are very concerned about the protection of whales, wolves, defenseless seal pups, and various endangered species of animals, and yet reveal little or no concern regarding the endangered and defenseless unborn human child.
- Various legislators are fighting to outlaw the death penalty, even for the worst of criminal offenders, because it is viewed as cruel and unusual punishment; yet they approve of the killing of thousands of unborn children who have never broken one of society's laws.
- If a pregnant woman was crossing the street in front of a hospital and was hit by a car and lost the child she was carrying, she could legally sue the driver of the car for the loss of the child's life. Yet another woman could enter the same hospital without an accident and legally kill her child by abortion.

- **Anatomical** — Belonging to a listing of all the parts of a body with their structures and functions



Will the replacing of God's laws by man's create a more caring and peaceful society, or the reverse? Why?

- A U.S. doctor could be legally charged for criminal neglect or murder if he willfully ignored, or used direct action to kill, a baby who was born prematurely. But he can legally perform an abortion, killing a child of the same developmental age who is still in his mother's womb.

Pro-abortionists object to the previous reasons from God's Word and created reality by posting the following arguments, which can be briefly answered as follows:

- **Fetus** — An unborn living creature — either animal or human

**?** Biologists name and classify all of the various living creatures they observe. A planted, growing corn seed is corn; a developing, unborn rabbit is a rabbit. Why would a developing, unborn child not be human? If it was not a human being, what type of living creature would it be?

- **Chromosome** — Fibres which carry the coded information for heredity in units called genes, found in the nucleus of all living cells

*Argument 1: The fetus is not really human; therefore, it can be killed.*

Those who hold this viewpoint will agree that at some point, the child growing in the womb of the mother becomes a human being. Some set this time at the sixth week of pregnancy, some at three months, some at felt signs of life by the mother, and some at birth. Hospitals, clinics, and state or provincial rules concerning the maximum development stage at which to allow abortions vary according to these different opinions. When we consider various medical facts, it would become impossible to speak in definite terms of a time in which the unborn child is not human, (such as a baby's heart beginning to beat at three weeks, his brain waves being traceable at six weeks, and all of the baby's internal organs being present and functioning at eleven weeks). Further, if there was a time after conception in which the living and growing unborn child was not *human*, what type of living creature would it be? It has the twenty-six **chromosome** makeup that is distinctively human. What would this living and growing child be classified as, if it were not a human being? To morally and ethically permit abortion, one must be able to prove beyond all doubt that unborn children are not human.

A pregnant woman entered a doctor's office carrying a year-old child in her arms. She informed her doctor that she desired an abortion because caring for two children that would be less than two years apart in age would be impossible for her.

After listening to her request, the doctor calmly responded by suggesting that they kill the child in her arms instead of the one in her womb because this would be easier to perform and would be of less risk to her.

The woman stared in shock at the doctor and finally whispered, “You murderer!”

The doctor then explained to her how the child in her womb and the one in her arms were both living children and that he would be a murderer if he consented to kill either one. Therefore he could never morally agree to perform an abortion unless the mother’s life was clearly in danger.

If a person’s country, state, or province declares abortion to be legal, does this mean that a person may have, or a doctor may perform, an abortion without committing murder? Why or why not?

*Argument 2: The fetus requires a host body and therefore cannot be considered fully human because it is dependent on another.*

Those who uphold this argument of individual **viability** tread on very dangerous territory. If it is true that an individual is less human because he is dependent upon another person or object, we could also argue that the newborn, the **senile**, the physically and mentally handicapped, and the medically dependent are all less human because they are directly dependent on others; that we may, therefore, dispose of them as we choose. If it is murder for a mother to kill her newborn child which is entirely dependent upon her (consider especially an infant born prematurely), why is it not regarded as murder to kill her child before it is born?

*Argument 3: A woman has the right to do with her body as she wants.*

Even if this argument were true (which it is not, for we are all answerable to God for all of our actions), this would not give her the right to do with another person’s body as she desires. Abortion involves the destruction of another person’s body, her unborn child’s. To argue that the living fetus is part of the mother’s body defies reason: which organ of her body would it be? Whose blood type, heartbeats, and brain waves are being recorded when the fetus is examined — the mother’s or her child’s? To willfully end the life of another for one’s own convenience is murder.

*Argument 4: If abortion upon demand is declared illegal again, women will have abortions anyway by traveling to other countries or through illegal and unsafe street abortionists.*

- **Host body** — A living body upon which another is totally dependent for life
- **Viability** — Having the capability of sustaining individual life, of living on its own
- **Senile** — Those experiencing the weaknesses of old age, especially the loss of memory and logical thinking



Is abortion a matter that strictly pertains to that which a woman does with her own body, or to what she does with the life of another body — her child’s? Why is it important to properly understand this distinction?

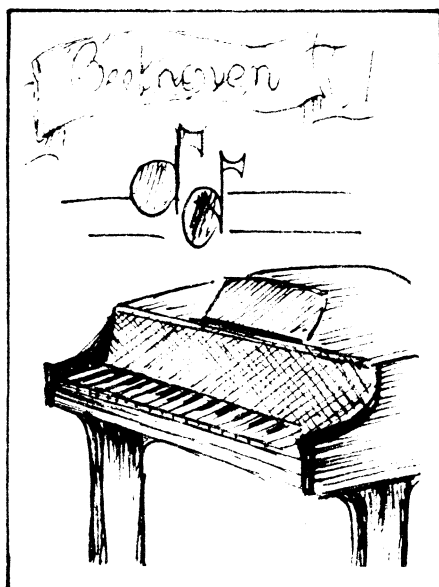
- **Ethical** — Morally upright

The fact that other areas of the world practice things which we morally forbid, or that items can be purchased illegally which are outlawed, is not a proper basis for law making. Our laws must be based on sound **ethical** principles; if abortion is the taking of the life of another, it must be forbidden by law. Further, whatever evidence can be gathered regarding this matter indicates that the backstreet abortionists remain active even after abortion upon demand is permitted.

*Argument 5: Death before birth is better for the “unwanted” child, than living a life of “unwantedness.”*

To give people decisional powers to determine if another individual is “wanted” or “unwanted” is most dangerous. The implications of this viewpoint are staggering. Once human life is devalued to a level of human decision concerning its “worthiness” or its “wantedness,” then the horrors of Nazi-defined “worthless” or “unwanted” human beings are again brought into the field of human dealings. Would some not place the severely mentally retarded, paralyzed, invalid, senile, and others in this same category? Further, do not many “unwanted” pregnancies result in “wanted” children after birth? Do not many “unwanted” children overcome severe social handicaps in their youth and function as useful adult citizens? Are not adoption agencies continually short of infants for parents who desperately want “unwanted” children?

- **Syphilis** — An infectious venereal disease



A teacher once posed the following case to her class:

“The father of this fetus has **syphilis**; the mother, tuberculosis. They have had four previous children: the first is blind, the second died, the third is deaf and dumb, and the fourth has tuberculosis. The mother is now pregnant with her fifth child that is ‘unwanted’ and a clear ‘risk factor.’ If the parents desire an abortion, should this be permitted?”

After an intense discussion, the teacher informed her class that the child and situation she described was a true, historical one. The “unwanted” and “risky” unborn child they were discussing was Beethoven.

A devaluing of human life in our society is not only observable at the beginning, but also at the closing stages of human life. Abortion, but also **euthanasia**, are transgressions of God's sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill."

The word "euthanasia" is derived from two Greek words, "eu" meaning "good," and "thanatos" meaning "death." Euthanasia, therefore, literally means "good death." The present-day, **secular** use of this term does not refer to the biblical sense of a "good death" — a spiritually-prepared death — but it refers to a person taking certain measures to secure for himself or for another a shorter, more painless death. This practice is also named "mercy killing," a term which reflects the idea that it is kind or gracious to end a person's suffering by killing him.

Euthanasia can take place at all age levels and in all circumstances: from unwanted, severely-handicapped infants to younger or older persons suffering from severe diseases or accidents. The most common use of euthanasia in our society today, however, is with elderly people.

Euthanasia can be exercised either passively or actively. *Passive euthanasia* secures the death of a person by withholding certain necessary means to preserve life — required medical treatments and medicines or necessities of food and shelter. A newborn, severely-handicapped baby's death resulting from being left unfed and unattended or an elderly person's death resulting from not receiving required **therapeutic** blood transfusions are examples of passive euthanasia.

*Active euthanasia* refers to the killing of a person through direct actions. An elderly, terminally-ill man's death caused by an intentional overdose of painkiller is an example of active euthanasia.

The motive underlying both active and passive euthanasia is to kill. Euthanasia is murder; it breaks God's sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." No one may take the life of another outside of the three exceptions that God proclaims in His Word which were specified previously in this chapter: legitimate self-defense, just war, and required capital punishment. Beyond these biblical stipulations, no one may be instrumental in taking the life of another.

Human life is sacred because man is created in the image of God, he has a never-dying soul, and is destined for a never-ending eternity. This special sacredness extends to all human life: not only

- **Euthanasia** — The willful killing of the aged, infirm, or incurably diseased

- **Secular** — Non-religious; without God; separated from His Word



To a secular humanist, putting a dog or horse "to sleep" is not much different from putting a suffering person "to sleep." Why is this reasoning rejected by a biblical Christian?

- **Therapeutic** — Serving to aid recovery; to cure