

The Seed of Life: An Operative Creed for Godly Living.

God is the creator of all life and of everything good, as the book of Genesis reports. He created all things for his own purposes and by his own power.

Psalm 19 reveals that “The heavens declare the glory of God” and certainly all the works of God's creation glorify him and were made to glorify him.¹ God does not do evil for he is himself wholly good, the highest good, and the one who defines what is good.² So God has done a good thing in giving glory to himself by making a universe which does likewise. God created the first human beings, Adam and Eve, in his own image also for his glory.³ Therefore the children of Adam and Eve, the entirety of the human race, a singular family, ought to glorify God with every breath, thought, feeling, and action.⁴ Alas, the first father and mother of humanity rebelled against God by direct disobedience in acting to glorify the self instead of the Creator.⁵ This disobedience is the origin of sin. As the first parents acted evilly, so too their children, the entire human race, act in evil as they inherit sin and the doom of death at conception.⁶

Thankfully, God acted in mercy towards the parents of humanity, and also to their progeny, in the promised seed of the woman, the Christ, who is the only way of salvation from sin and death.⁷ He is spoken of all throughout the Bible, first in foreshadowing and prophetic texts, and then in the gospels which record his story:⁸ the earthly ministry, crucifixion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ the Lord. The record of Acts, the letters of the Apostles which follow, and the book of Revelation, are comprised of the stories of the early church, counsel and teaching from the Apostles, and a prophetic vision of the end of time. The books of the Bible tell one story: that God, in mercy and grace has opened the Way by whom sinners might be saved and receive eternal life.⁹ By the power of the Holy Spirit, the Bible instructs and shows those who seek God, how to live in the way of godliness. God, in Holy Scripture, reveals the way human beings may live abundantly, eternally, and joyfully.¹⁰

Relying upon God's revealed Word, this paper will extract the following: a creed of faith by which a person may live a life that glorifies God as regards the lives of others, the welfare of creation, and one's own body and soul. But first one must understand the nature and value of human life in God's eyes.¹¹ One must understand from God's perspective because God is the author of these realities and, as the only true constant of the universe, he is the only one who can determine nature and value with any permanence.¹² To measure truth by any other rule is to be inconsistent in the best case scenario and wholly evil in the worst case scenario.¹³

What is the nature of human life?

As stated above, human beings are created in the image of God. God created men and women with good, complex, and wondrous bodies and souls.¹⁴ Although Genesis records that all animals are

¹ Psalm 8:1, 19:1, 50:6, 89:5, 98:4,6,8; Luke 19:37-40; Romans 1:20; Colossians 1:16; Book of Confessions 3.01

² 1 John 1:5, 3:5; James 1:13

³ Book of Confessions 7.001

⁴ Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37

⁵ Romans 1:25; Book of Confessions 3.02

⁶ Genesis 8:21; Romans 3:9-20, 23, 6:23

⁷ Genesis 3:15; John 3:16-18

⁸ Hebrews 1:1-2

⁹ John 3:16-18, 11:25, 14:6; Ephesians 2:5-8

¹⁰ John 10:10; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

¹¹ Proverbs 1:7; Isaiah 55:7-9

¹² Psalm 139; Proverbs 15:3,11; Job 12:13; Jeremiah 10:12; Romans 11:33

¹³ Proverbs 12:15, 14:12, 16:2

¹⁴ Psalm 139:14

alive, humans receive the breath of life intimately from their Creator in addition to being made in God's image and so have a soul, by which they perceive God and self.¹⁵ Humans, by nature, are dependent on God for individual life, which God gives at conception, as no coupling of man and woman can generate life without God's involvement.¹⁶ They are dependent on God for sustained life and protection.¹⁷ They are dependent on God for identity and purpose.¹⁸ They are dependent on God for the ability to know and the substance of knowledge itself.¹⁹ These things are innately human and God is glorified by their creation, but God glorified himself even more by creating Adam and Eve, male and female, in the image of his own holiness, knowledge, and righteousness.²⁰ In other words, humanity, in being made holy, is set apart for God in order to worship and serve God. Humanity, in being made reasonable, has the mental and spiritual faculties to know God, to understand his words and commands and to then relate such knowledge to one another; humanity, in being made righteous, was created with perfect moral character, with the very law of God written on the heart, so that Adam and Eve lived rightly concerning each other and the created world.

In addition, God created human beings with many limitations.²¹ Psalm 8 reveals that God made human beings "a little lower than the angels", not with unchecked potential. Even so, God gave his little image bearers a place of great honor, making them vice-regents over the earth and by that position he made humanity responsible for the beneficial cultivation of all life on the planet.²² Adam and Eve and all their children, therefore, are sacred relics and holy treasures that carry, in limited form, a living expression of God himself and they glorify God because they think, feel, speak, and act in a manner like him, bringing praise to God and goodness to one another and the earth.

What is the nature of human life after the fall of humanity into sin?

God chose Adam as a representative of the entire human race because God wanted to have a covenant relationship with his image bearers, a binding treaty within which the creature obeys the creator and is so rewarded with eternal life. So Adam and Eve were tested in the garden. God forbid them to eat the fruit of a certain tree.²³ He told them to eat any fruit in the garden but this one, and this was not only a test but an opportunity to love God by obedience. The parents of humanity disobeyed God and ate the fruit, an action motivated by a desire to glorify the self, the creature, instead of the Creator.²⁴ And so sin entered the world through Adam's representative act, disobedience, and thereby came death to the human race.²⁵ The image bearers of God were instantly corrupted in every facet of their nature because their core desire shifted from seeking to glorify God to seeking to glorify oneself.²⁶ The nature of humanity from that point forward, and until God destroys all evil, is a distortion of that original nature which was seen in Adam and Eve before they committed the first sin. With the orientation of the human heart so twisted, even actions or deeds that appear to some as good, or even heroic and exemplary, are in actuality wholly wicked. Men and women born with this sin nature, which is inherited by everyone through natural descent from Adam, do not desire to give glory to God but instead they use the now corrupted facets of God's image to glorify themselves.

¹⁵ Genesis 2:7; 1 Corinthians 2:11

¹⁶ Genesis 4:1, 11:30, 29:31, 30:2,22; Matthew 10:26-31; Psalm 139:13-16

¹⁷ Colossians 1:17; Deuteronomy 11:25; Joshua 7:1-8:29; Psalm 46

¹⁸ Genesis 1:26-28, 2:15-20

¹⁹ Job 38:36; Proverbs 1:7; Ecclesiastes 2:26; John 1:4

²⁰ Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10; Book of Confessions 6.023

²¹ Job 38-42:6

²² Genesis 1:28; 2:15

²³ Genesis 2:16-17

²⁴ Genesis 3:1-8

²⁵ Romans 5:12-19

²⁶ Romans 1:25; 3:9-18

Understanding how sin distorts, one must conclude that humanity, meaning the nature initially created by God, is no longer recognizable. Any traits among people today that seem truly human are as the partial walls and broken foundations of a ruin, suggesting but not composing a city. Such a statement may shock the reader, who by experience and exercise of reason may profess to possess humanity and to have witnessed human nature in others. But a popular sentiment, that to make a mistake is only human, shows effectively how twisted the essence of human nature has become. Where once godliness and perfection defined humanity, now sinfulness and imperfection are the definition. The Bible is clear: human beings, on account of sin, are devoid of the prior excellence that God labeled as very good.²⁷

However, wondrously, the Lord continues to value humanity despite its rejection of him. The nature of humankind is so sacred to God that, even with sins abundant, he declared to Noah that those who take human life, even animals, thereby forfeit their own lives.²⁸ The Christ further unfolded God's high estimation of human life by saying that even anger towards someone, even a spoken curse, is an equivalent to murder.²⁹ No one should curse the image of God, not to mention spilling human blood and taking a life, even if only a vague semblance of that image remains.³⁰ So God held Adam and Eve as sacred even though they were self-corrupted. And despite his cursing and exiling them, he gave them an unbreakable promise and a living hope, along with the rest of the human race.³¹

What is the nature of human life redeemed by Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ fulfills the promise of God and the hope of humankind. Sinful people can be saved by faith in Jesus Christ, whose death on the cross pays the penalty for sin and whose resurrection promises eternal life and a new nature. Adam, and humanity with him, participated in and failed to uphold the covenant of works (the arrangement God made with his image bearers that if they obey they will live eternally, and conversely, if they disobey, they die).³² Having broken the covenant, Adam and Eve were cursed and exiled from the Garden of Eden, with the doom of death over their heads.³³ One might have expected God to destroy his failed creation outright, but the Holy Scriptures reveal that sin was no surprise to the creator; he already had a plan of merciful restoration.³⁴ This gospel, the good news of salvation from a corrupt nature and death, is promised in mystery to the first parents of humanity even at the same time that they are cursed for their sin.³⁵ God gave that promise because he still desired a covenant relationship with his distorted image bearers, even as his holiness and justice cried out for their destruction.³⁶ So God moved to make them holy once again. God the Father moved by sending God the Son who, in perfect obedience, set aside his own glory, became a child in the womb and then a righteous man in a sinful world, declared the kingdom as a prophet, performed miracles, healed the sick, suffered ridicule, suffered torture, and suffered crucifixion as a blasphemer or terrorist in order to replace the wickedness of many with the righteousness of Christ.³⁷

The Son of God in human form, having a perfect human nature, died on that cross, rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, and from his place of total sovereignty at the right hand of God the Father, he sends with the Father the Spirit of God to seal, counsel, comfort, and transform all those

²⁷ Genesis 1:31; Romans 3:23

²⁸ Genesis 9:5-6

²⁹ Matthew 5:21-26

³⁰ Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17; Leviticus 17:10-14; James 3:9

³¹ Matthew 1:22-23, 2:5-6, 4:14-16; 2 Corinthians 1:20

³² Genesis 3:6-13

³³ Genesis 3:16-24

³⁴ Acts 2:23; Romans 9:23; Ephesians 1:4,5,11

³⁵ Genesis 3:15; Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38

³⁶ Romans 3:21-26, 5:6-8

³⁷ Mark 2:17; John 1:14, 5:3-40; Philippians 2:6-11; Colossians 2:9-15

people God desires to redeem into the image of Jesus Christ.³⁸ Before, God created out of dust human beings in his own image, but now God transforms sinners into the image of the Incarnate and Risen Christ.³⁹ And although the technical parts of this new image might match the former one, something altogether unheard of and unforeseen takes place in this change. This transformation is not just a return to the garden of Eden, it is a new thing that drives the people of God forward into the City of Heaven.⁴⁰ And the new component is God himself, for now his dwelling place is among human beings.⁴¹ The difference is like that between a beautiful, but empty, house and a house that is both beautiful and occupied by an even more beautiful and joyous person. One may admire the former but will visit the latter. In this new covenant of grace, the Spirit of God unites with the saints of God, mysteriously dwelling within them as they live by the Spirit to think, feel, speak, and act in the manner of Jesus Christ.⁴²

Wonderful and beautiful things comprise this new human nature which, being incomplete until the return of the Lord Jesus, the believer experiences as a process of changing “from one degree of glory to another.”⁴³ One need only look at the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 15:22-23, the qualities ascribed to godly love in First Corinthians 13, or the attributes of godliness Jesus himself discusses in his beatitudes in Matthew 5:1-12 and Luke 6:20-23, to find excellent and brief descriptions of the new humanity.⁴⁴ The difficulty, though, as most Christians today struggle to obtain such qualities, is that the sin nature remains to some extent.⁴⁵ When a person finally repents of unbelief, by the power of the gospel message, God forgives them, embraces them, and imparts his Spirit to them.⁴⁶ And being appropriately baptized in the name of Father, Son, and Spirit, the believer finds devastatingly that the heart retains its sinful inclinations.⁴⁷ But this does not mean that the gift of a new nature, purchased by Christ's sacrifice, has in anyway way been compromised. God's method of transformation is better thought of as a seed of life, a seed of faith that grows over time.⁴⁸ After planting, a rhythm of repentance, prayer to, worship of, and communion with God draws the poison of sin out, infusing Christ's own nature into that person.⁴⁹ This work is done by God, wherein the human subject takes part in small and ineffective activities in faith that God's grace will bring what strength alone can not.⁵⁰ This work God does to his own end which includes preparing and calling the believer to do good works.⁵¹ Then at the return of Christ, he will complete the process of change, completing the new human nature in Christ's image, by his appearance.⁵²

What is the value of human life?

Therefore, to be truly human means to be redeemed by and reconciled with the Almighty, All-Merciful God; to deserve nothing of what is given by merit, being a fallen image once devoted to evil, but to receive by faith all the treasures of heaven in Jesus Christ and completely to belong to him, being

³⁸ John 14:15-17,26, 16:5-15; Ephesians 1:13, 2:22, 4:30

³⁹ 1 Corinthians 15:48-49; 2 Corinthians 3:12-18

⁴⁰ Revelation 21

⁴¹ Revelation 21:3-4

⁴² Romans 8:1-17; Galatians 5:25

⁴³ 2 Corinthians 3:18

⁴⁴ Colossians 3:12-17

⁴⁵ Philippians 3:12-13; 1 John 2:1-2

⁴⁶ Ephesians 1:13; Colossians 2:9-14

⁴⁷ Hebrews 12:4; 1 Peter 1:14

⁴⁸ 1 Corinthians 3:6-7

⁴⁹ Romans 8:13; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 3:9

⁵⁰ Philippians 2:13; Ephesians 2:8, 3:14-19

⁵¹ Ephesians 2:10

⁵² 1 John 3:2

ransomed from sin and death by his precious blood.⁵³ God set the value of human life extremely high, first by creating in humanity his own glorious image, which was lost. Second, God increased that price immeasurably more by sending the Son of God who took on flesh, first being human cells in the womb that grew into a child and, then being born, grew into adulthood, all the while living in perfect holiness, righteousness, and knowledge as he is the very image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.⁵⁴ Third, people are precious to God because he is able to transform them into his image again by union with Jesus Christ. And life, from an earthly perspective, is inestimably valuable because in it God can be known, God can be enjoyed, and God can be glorified if one lives by faith in Jesus Christ.

How ought human beings to treat one another?

The right way for one human to treat another, considering the nature and value of human life, is in the perfect love of Christ.⁵⁵ Jesus set the standard for human behavior and attitude during his earthly ministry. Jesus loved everyone he met, regardless of every factor, and every time he did so with true insight into the needs of each person.⁵⁶ Now, he obeyed God the Father first for he loved his Father and devoted himself to his Father, doing only the Father's will.⁵⁷ And, as it was, God the Father desired that Jesus love humanity primarily by suffering and giving his life to pay for sin, but also in ministering healing, performing miracles, and instructing many in the ways of the Kingdom of Heaven.⁵⁸ In doing those things he honored the men and women around him, acknowledging their sacredness and value in God's eyes while also drawing them to himself in order to restore the image of God in them. So for humans today the order of business is to first love God, and that means to follow the commands of God, chief among them to have faith in the Son and to live by the Spirit.⁵⁹ Second, the true human proclaims the message of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ so that people may be forgiven their sins, enjoy fellowship with God, and be granted eternal life, which is the purpose of human life.⁶⁰ Third, the true human loves sacrificially by giving of what one has to those who have not, defending those who are defenseless, healing those who need healing, and testifying always to the truth that there may light in the world to live by.⁶¹ As a special note for this third category, one must love one's enemies and those who can not repay what is given because that is the epitome of what Jesus has done in bringing salvation to sinners.⁶²

Unfortunately, working to love others as Jesus loves can put one in a position to be taken advantage of. Christians must bear in mind that the Bible no where directs the followers of Jesus to be naive. Instead, they are commanded to be "wise as serpents and innocent as doves."⁶³ Sinful men and women, by that distorted nature, hate Jesus and the followers of Jesus and will at times intentional work to hurt the church.⁶⁴ In those situations believers ought to rejoice that they are so recognizable as followers of Christ that they are persecuted.⁶⁵ Paul the Apostle endeavored to suffer for the cause of the gospel that he could be united more closely with the Lord.⁶⁶ But then there will be times when

⁵³ Ephesians 2:5-8; Book of Confessions 4.001

⁵⁴ Matt. 1:18, 3:17; Luke 1:31,35,41-45, 2:26-33,40,46-47,52, 3:22; John 1:1-18; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 4:15, 5:9

⁵⁵ John 13:34-35, 15:12-13

⁵⁶ Matthew 19:16-22, 21:12-17; Mark 1:40-2:12, 10:46-52; Luke 5:1-11, 7:36-50; John 1:43-51, 2:1-12

⁵⁷ John 4:34, 6:37-39, 15:10

⁵⁸ Matthew 8:1-34, 13:1-52; Mark 5:21-43, 6:30-44; Luke 20:19-40, 18:35-19:10; John 4:1-26,46-54, 6:22-59

⁵⁹ Acts 2:37-39; 1 John 3:23, 5:1-3; Romans 8:5-11

⁶⁰ Matthew 28:8-20; Romans 10:14-17

⁶¹ Exodus 20:13,16; John 3:20-21, 15:13; Acts 3:1-6; James 1:27; 1 John 3:17

⁶² Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 6:27-36

⁶³ Matthew 10:16

⁶⁴ Matthew 10:16-25; John 15:18-16:4

⁶⁵ Matthew 5:12; 1 Peter 4:12-19

⁶⁶ Philippians 3:10

people will act in evil ways simply because it is in their nature to do so, surely damaging everyone around them. Christians, being enlightened by fruitful study of the scripture and the counsel of the Spirit, must discern the elements of such an event, being careful not to trust in sinful natures, but to trust in the Lord.⁶⁷ In the case of violent crime, the law of the Lord allows for reasonable self defense. In Matthew 5:38-42, Jesus refers to the retributive laws of the Old Testament and calls for forgiveness and a willingness to be insulted and disgraced for the good of others.⁶⁸ It in no way serves a violent attacker if the victim simply submits. The motivation to hurt and kill, not to mention rape or habitual abuse, is a sickness of the soul and flagrantly evil.⁶⁹ For the sake of the offender and to preserve the precious life of the victim, the offender must be stopped. And as the law directs, witnesses to crimes are responsible to help.⁷⁰ In the context of family or any group wherein there is a protector and provider, whose responsibility to God is to show forth the protection and providence of God, duty requires that the weak be defended by force. And if the life of the attacker can be spared, it ought to be spared.⁷¹ But if the attacker dies in the pursuit of violence, one can not say that God did not bring justice and there is no law in scripture that places guilt on the defender in this case if reasonable force was used.⁷² Thanks be to God, though, for the blessing of police forces around the world where the task of marshaling criminals and defending law abiding citizens is in the hands of those trained for the task.

This situation extends to each nation which, because of another nation or group, faces great violence and the deaths of it's citizens. Each nation ought to defend it's people, using force if necessary.⁷³ But war is one of the greatest displays of evil and the rampant destruction of valuable human life upon the earth. War must not be entertained lightly but as the utmost of extreme measures and only when there is no other way to protect human lives.⁷⁴ It must be remembered that God will judge justly for every drop of human blood spilled. And, knowing the world to be sinful, any law or institution that truly protects human life should be encouraged as God established human governments for that very reason.⁷⁵ One idea prevalent in Western thought, the belief that a tyrannical government should be overthrown by force, defies the Biblical teaching that commands believers to submit to the authorities in so far as they do not force believers into sin, in which case peaceful resistance is the only godly action.⁷⁶ For those who trust in Jesus, the focus of living with and around other people is to love them with the gospel and sacrifice, showing the glory, grace, and mercy of the Lord in every way that the Holy Spirit leads and enables.

How ought humanity to treat God's Creation?

Following the perspective of love for others, then, consider that God made humanity also to be caretakers of the earth.⁷⁷ As caretakers, made in Christ to set the earth and its animals free from the destruction and waste of sin, one must take care to benefit all areas of creation as responsible servants, for the creation itself is to the glory of God.⁷⁸ One must not be wasteful but wise, taking care to produce good things for the benefit of everything. One must remember the generosity of God in

⁶⁷ Matthew 10:17; John 2:23-25; 1 John 4:1-3

⁶⁸ Exodus 21:1-23:9; Leviticus 24:17-23

⁶⁹ Exodus 20:13; Proverbs 1:8-19; Isaiah 59;

⁷⁰ Leviticus 5:1

⁷¹ Romans 12:19

⁷² Exodus 22:2-3

⁷³ Luke 3:14; Romans 13:4; Matthew 8:9-10; Acts 10:1-2; Revelation 17:4-6

⁷⁴ A.A. Hodge, *The Westminster Confession: A Commentary* (Carlisle: Banner of Truth Trust, 2002), 293-297.

⁷⁵ Romans 13:1-7

⁷⁶ Acts 4:18-21

⁷⁷ Genesis 1:26,29, 2:15,19-20; Deuteronomy 20:19-20

⁷⁸ Psalm 19:1-4, 24:1, 147:4,8-9,15-18; Romans 8:18-22

creating life, making it beautiful, and then sustaining it daily by his active will.⁷⁹ To live on such a planet as this one, so graced by God's own glory, is a privilege on account of which people see all manner of wondrous delights on a moment by moment basis . So it is for God that the Christian takes care of this sacred planet which God himself owns. The very place where God has revealed himself in the form of his own creation, the place where the Christ shed his own blood, is only lent to the human race as a blessing to be taken care of by faithful stewards.⁸⁰ Additionally, the church, who takes on God's name and Spirit, can bless God's reputation in the world by showing faithfulness in caring for the planet.⁸¹

Eventually, God will remove all temporal things from this world when he establishes the new heavens and the new earth.⁸² That does not mean Christians can be wasteful, for God will judge every careless word and certainly every careless act.⁸³ But one should be concerned for the welfare of human souls, which are eternally saved or eternally condemned, at the same time that one cares for the temporary animals and plants of this temporary globe. This will require dedicated use of every moment for to do both is difficult, but it is possible with God.⁸⁴ And as far as Biblical principles on how to care for the planet, there are not many but there are some. The Sabbath rest commanded by God to be observed every week is also to be extended to domestic animals.⁸⁵ Even the fields of the earth used for farming are given rest in the law every seventh year.⁸⁶ Understanding that animals, plants, and the earth are burdened by use for labor and production, then they ought to be given appropriate rest not just to avoid their destruction but for their benefit. This principle could be applied to the use of pollution producing machines, also, perhaps giving the sky and the trees which filter the air a break from the burden of toxins. But, to be sure, pollution is itself hurtful to the planet and responsible caretakers will seek to remove such things from the earth. Being that God made humanity so crafty, people ought to be able to plot more ways to benefit and protect the planet. Many Christians blessed in the area of science need not feel displaced if their trade does not make them a human doctor, they too are part of the body of Christ and ought to employ their talents to the benefit of the kingdom.⁸⁷

How ought human beings to treat themselves?

Just as a person must love God, neighbor, creature, and even the soil, so too must a person love the self.⁸⁸ To take in toxic chemicals, perverted images, or blasphemous words is to desecrate the very dwelling place of God.⁸⁹ To entertain sexually immoral things, and the Bible sufficiently details what those are, is again to desecrate God's temple. For the new nature of humanity is to be the very dwelling place of God's Spirit and as such the body and the soul should be nourished, protected, and enjoyed in all godliness.⁹⁰ The Lord will hold people responsible for how they treat their bodies, even if his Spirit does not dwell in them because of unbelief, for God the Son made the human form sacred, from the womb to beyond the grave, by taking it on himself. And although God judges first on the basis of faith, or lack thereof, the desecration of a possible temple, the further mistreatment of the image of God despite its brokenness since Adam, enrages the God of life. Such things must not be done. For the

⁷⁹ Psalm 104:24-30

⁸⁰ Genesis 9:2-5; Psalm 115:16; Jeremiah 27:5; Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 12:41-48; 1 Timothy 4:4; 1 Peter 4:10-11

⁸¹ Philippians 2:14-16

⁸² Hebrews 12:26-29; Revelation 21:1

⁸³ Matthew 12:36

⁸⁴ Luke 1:37

⁸⁵ Exodus 20:10, 23:12

⁸⁶ Exodus 23:10

⁸⁷ Matthew 25:14-30

⁸⁸ Genesis 1:26-27; Matthew 7:12; John 13:34; 1 Corinthians 6:13; Ephesians 5:28-29

⁸⁹ Leviticus 11:45; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20; Matthew 15:19-20

⁹⁰ Colossians 3:17

believer, the treatment of self in a godly fashion is of utmost importance for three reasons: One, God created human life for himself, giving shape to the dust and granting a soul to make a representation of his own image; Two, Jesus Christ gave his body and blood to purchase, or ransom, people from sin and so owns them; and Three, on account of the Holy Spirit who dwells, though mysteriously, in the body and soul of the believer. No one owns their own body or soul nor do they have a right to do with it as they wish. Either people defiantly use it for sin, when it really belongs to their Creator and Redeemer, or they obediently turn it over to God for his purposes. Common sense, instructed by Holy Scripture and illuminated by God the Spirit, ought to be sufficient to determine what benefits the body and soul.

Unfortunately, though, common sense does not always prevail. For who would do things to destroy or harm one's own body? And yet, people do engage in self-destructive activities. The reasons behind self-destruction can be difficult to find, but matters of addiction, eating disorders, pornography and adultery, self-mutilation, wanton self-loathing, and suicide are areas where people can not help themselves. Here the church much be watching, ready and able to rescue those who are so lost, so hurt, so confused that they willfully seek their death, regardless of the pace they take.⁹¹ They need foremost to take in the power of the gospel, the good news of Christ's own life given up so that all who receive him may have abundant, eternal life. If emergency care is needed, even hospitalization, it is the responsibility of the various parts of Christ's body to act in the defense of the other parts, just as one's own immune system defends every cell.⁹² But even if the church is watching, hurting people can often go unnoticed unless they themselves cry out for help which in the love of one's own self for God's glory is their responsibility. Those who suffer in such ways glorify God by asking for help, for it shows some semblance of faith or hope, but it also shows concern for one's own body and soul as is proper. And great glory will be to God for he can and does save people from all manner of darkness and hopelessness. Only let the truth ring out that human life is utterly precious to God and that he calls people to seek him, to find him, to love him, and to be recreated in the eternal image of him who is humanity's only Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

What is the “Seed of Life”?

Borrowing the image from Jesus' own parable, the “Seed of Life” is the truth concerning Jesus Christ, his death, resurrection, ascension, and rule.⁹³ So when that seed is planted in a person, when the truth concerning Jesus is put in the core of a human, that person believes in Jesus, repents of wicked sin, and finds mercy and love from God Almighty. That person, with life growing out of the truth planted in the heart and mind, then identifies the world, other people, the creation, and the self correctly and can then live correctly. So the “Seed of Life” is a pretend term invented only to draw attention to the fact that the nature and value of human life is wrapped up eternally in Jesus Christ and the truth concerning him that has been faithfully recorded in the Bible. This paper declares that truth, though in condensed form, so that believers might study to discover the “Seed of Life”, to grow up in Christ's life, and so to be life giving and life affirming to everyone and everything around. And may the spread and overflow of Christ's life into the church and then out into the world be to the glory of God, Father and Son and Spirit, eternally.

⁹¹ Proverbs 24:11-12

⁹² 1 Corinthians 12:4-27

⁹³ Matthew 13:1-23