

The Sanctity of Life

Lesson 2: The Author and Giver of Life -- Acts 17:24-28

Stop reading for just a moment and notice that you are breathing. You did not decide to take that last breath; it came on its own, as the one before it did, as thousands have today without a single thought from you. Your heart is beating right now, faster than you can count, and you are doing nothing to make it happen. We move through our days as though life were simply the floor we stand on, solid and self-explanatory. We almost never stop to ask where it comes from or who keeps it going.

When Paul stood in Athens, surrounded by a city full of gods made of stone and metal, he refused to play their game. He did not flatter their idols or add the God of heaven to their crowded shelf. He told them something their philosophers had never quite dared to say: there is one God who made the world and everything in it, and far from needing anything from us, He is the one “who gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.” Every breath in that marketplace, every heartbeat in that proud city, was on loan from a God they did not know.

This is the truth Genesis already hinted at and that the whole Bible assumes. Life is not something we generate or own. It is something we receive. The God who made us also sustains us, moment by moment, so that, as Paul says, “in him we live and move and have our being.” We are not self-contained. We are held. The same is true of the smallest unborn child and the oldest dying saint, of the strong and the weak alike. Not one of us authored our own life, and not one of us keeps it going by our own power.

That changes everything about how we hold life, our own and everyone else’s. If life is a gift, then it is precious in a way that nothing we manufacture could ever be, and it is not finally ours to discard. To receive your life as a gift from God is to begin to live with gratitude instead of entitlement, with reverence instead of carelessness. This lesson invites us to stop taking our breath for granted and to meet the One who gives it.

Group Discussion: Why do you think we so easily take life and breath for granted? What might change in a person, or a culture, that began to see every human life as a gift from God rather than a possession we own?

Personal Reflection: When was the last time you thanked God simply for being alive? What gets in the way of receiving your ordinary days as gifts from the One who gives life and breath to all?

Read Acts 17:24-28

Study Questions

1. Read Acts 17:24–25. Paul says God “gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.” What does it mean that God is not served by human hands “as though he needed anything,” and how does this reveal God as the source and giver of all life?
2. Take an honest inventory of your day so far: your breath, your heartbeat, your strength to rise from bed. How would your attitude toward this ordinary day change if you received each of these not as a given but as a gift from the God who “gives to all mankind life and breath”?
3. In verse 26 Paul says God “made from one man every nation” and “determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place.” What does it teach us about the worth of every human being that all nations share one origin and are appointed their times and places by God?
4. Where are you tempted to live as though your life and your time were your own to spend however you please? What would it look like this week to live as a steward of a life that belongs to God rather than as the owner of a life that belongs to you?
5. Read verse 28: “In him we live and move and have our being.” What does this say about how dependent we are on God at every moment, and how does this dependence dignify rather than diminish us?
6. When life feels most out of your control, illness, loss, uncertainty, where do you instinctively turn? How does the truth that in God “we live and move and have our being” steady you in the moments when everything else feels unsteady?
7. Read Job 12:7–10. Job says that “in his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind.” How does this teach that God holds authority over life and death, and why is it a comfort rather than a threat that our breath is in His hand?
8. Is there an area where you have quietly assumed that you, and not God, are the final authority over your life or someone else’s? How does recognizing God as the Author and Giver of life reorder the way you make decisions?
9. Trace how the truth that God alone gives life shapes our convictions about the beginning and the end of life. If life is God’s gift to give, what follows for how we regard the taking of innocent life and the question of whether anyone may claim final authority over when a life should end?
10. Look back over Acts 17:24–28 and Job 12:7–10 together. Name one specific way the truth that God is the Author and Giver of your life is changing how you live, and one concrete step you will take this week to live as someone whose very breath is a gift from Him.

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: Genesis 2:7, the Lord God breathed into man the breath of life and he became a living creature; Psalm 104:29–30, when you take away their breath they die, when

you send your Spirit they are created; Job 33:4, the Spirit of God has made me and the breath of the Almighty gives me life; Deuteronomy 32:39, I kill and I make alive, says the Lord; 1 Timothy 6:13, God who gives life to all things.

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